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THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
School of History, Classics
& Archaeology

‘For Christ’s Crown and Covenant’: An Historical Interpretation of Scottish Covenanting
Political Theology and its Contribution to the American Revolution in the Backcountry of
North Carolina

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ABSTRACT

This project examines the Covenanters' political thought and considers its transmission in Scotland and throughout the American Colonies with a focus particularly on the backcountry of North Carolina. By seeing the development of beliefs and political cultures, this study revises our understanding of the political implications of Scottish Covenantalism in colonial America.

Through the social network and correspondence of clergymen, Covenantalism became a driving force in religious orthodoxy among theologians and pastors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and interjected itself throughout diverse Atlantic political cultures. This thesis examines how 'radical' Presbyterians of the southern colonies used their pulpits not only for conversions, but also as lecterns for the articulation of political ideas. This project brings together the intellectual and the ecclesiastical for a more inclusive understanding of the political thought and strategies within several colonies that later supported and became active participants in the American Revolution.

This thesis illustrates the link between Scottish covenanting tradition and the American Revolution, thus further demonstrating that the religious stories of the Revolution were not just a New England story, nor were the ideological origins of the Revolution just 'English'. The political theology of the Covenanters demonstrates that their behaviour and methods for participating in the political discourse of the American Revolution and the period preceding it were in fact intentional and deliberate. The evidence shows that the Covenanters did not separate their theology

from their politics but used their theology to promote their politics. A secondary outcome expands our understanding of the intellectual history of the American Revolution to properly include more of the thirteen colonies and not limit the so-called enlightenment narrative to New England as others have contended.

This thesis thus contributes to knowledge by further illuminating the religious dimensions of political thought and action in the Atlantic world by shifting focus from the religious sinews of revolutionary thought and action in the northern colonies during the American Revolution to the lower southern colonies.

THESIS DECLARATION

I declare that I composed this thesis solely by myself. Likewise, I have not submitted, in whole or in part, my thesis in any previous application for a degree or professional qualification. Except where otherwise by reference or acknowledgement, the work presented is entirely my own.



Michael S. Griggs
S1256531

Date: 15/02/2019

To my beloved wife Rebecca, a constant reminder
to me of God's grace and favour

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Finally, many days through this journey were very difficult, but God provided me with abundant grace and endurance to complete this task. *Soli Deo Gloria*

The Declaration of Independence contains many elements of the Reformation thinking of Knox and Rutherford and should be carefully considered when discussing resistance. It speaks directly to the responsibility of citizens concerning oppressive civil government.¹

When reading *A Christian Manifesto* by Francis Schaeffer for an assignment in a course, I read the above quote and became fascinated with such an assertion without reference or citation. This compelled me to understand how Schaeffer made such a statement and felt duty-bound to determine the validity of his statement. This thesis provides the results of my pursuit.

¹ Francis Schaeffer, *A Christian Manifesto*, (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1981), p. 127.

Introduction

For the Covenanters, the definition of resistance as ‘the refusal to accept or comply with something’ was second nature.¹ In the late seventeenth-century, many of the Covenanters withdrew from politics after experiencing marginalisation and in some cases persecution. Although their activities in politics waned, their fervour remained when they preached. They called for the redemption of individual souls along with national salvation, whether they were in Scotland, Ireland, or America. Through these calls for salvation, resistance became a trend in sermons and classrooms. The role of sermons in the dissemination of political ideas in colonial America and leading up to the American Revolution was vital. According to Harry Stout, ‘more sermons were preached in 1776 than in any previous year in New England’s history’.² Hermann Wellenreuther has noted how ‘the sermon reflects attitudes and revolutionary thoughts of groups. Sermons blend local concerns with larger theoretical issues and in that respect differ from pamphlets’.³ According to Alice Baldwin, ‘one cannot read the sermons, addresses and letters of the New Light clergy without becoming convinced that the Bible and the ideas of religious liberty held by the Presbyterian ministers and taught to their people are at least one main source of the political convictions current in Revolutionary America’.⁴ Wellenreuther also contended that ‘at the same time, the sermon’s message is carried and explained before its publication

¹ *Oxford Dictionaries*, s.v. ‘resistance’, accessed 18 August 2017, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/resistance>

² Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England*, 25th Anniversary Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p. 312.

³ Wellenreuther, ‘From the Past to the Future of the “American Israel”’, p. 92.

⁴ Alice M. Baldwin, ‘Sowers of Sedition: the Political Theories of Some of the New Light Presbyterian Clergy of Virginia and North Carolina’ in *The William & Mary Quarterly* 5, no 1 (January 1948), p. 59.

by its listeners into families, villages, and other communities – the circulation of sermons is most likely wider than that of pamphlets’.⁵ He further asserted that owing to their ‘status within social groups, orality, and distribution in print’ ministers became ‘powerful transmitters of revolutionary thought’.⁶

The publishing of sermons was a trend that allowed for the dissemination of ideas in the local church to a larger audience. This benefited those who did not regularly attend the local church. In their sermons and pamphlets, ministers drew on Scripture to justify and promote resistance to so-called tyranny and later advocated active rebellion against tyranny. In addition to sermons, many shared books among families and small local libraries. One such book was Alexander Henderson’s *Instructions for Defensive Arms*, which openly called for resistance to the magistrate. Although Henderson did not intend to publish his *Instructions*, a deposed minister took it to Ireland and published it around 1639.⁷ This pamphlet read throughout Ireland and Scotland and republished in 1754, highlighted an active call for rebellion against a magistrate they deemed a tyrant.⁸

In the American Colonies, Alexander Craighead exemplified Henderson’s same ideas through his radical leadership. Craighead’s grandfather, Robert, served as a Presbyterian minister in Ireland shortly after Henderson around 1657 until his death in 1711. Craighead’s father, Thomas, after first receiving his education in medicine,

⁵ Wellenreuther, ‘From the Past to the Future of the “American Israel”’, pp. 92-93.

⁶ Wellenreuther, ‘From the Past to the Future of the “American Israel”’, pp. 92-93.

⁷ Thomas M’Crie, ‘Life of Alexander Henderson’ in *Lives of Alexander Henderson and James Guthrie with specimens of their writings* (Edinburgh: Printed for the Assembly’s committee, 1846), p. 26.

⁸ Alexander Henderson, ‘Instructions for Defensive Arms’ in *The History of the Church and State of Scotland from the Ascension of K. Charles I to the Restoration of K. Charles II*, Vol. II, ed. Alexander Stevenson (Edinburgh: Booksellers in Town and Country, 1754), p. 691.

became a minister and served in Donegal, Ireland until 1715 before immigrating to America. According to James Geddes Craighead, due to the ‘oppressions endured by the Presbyterians of that country from the government and from the Established Church, and their past experience giving them but little hope of any permanent relief, large numbers of the people determined to emigrate to America’.⁹ Because of this experience, one can reason that Thomas passed down and taught Henderson’s and other Covenanters’ radical ideas of resistance to his son.

Craighead promoted resistance to the crown. Although he died before the time of the Regulator Movement in North Carolina and the later American Revolution, his ideas of resistance influenced the families he ministered to, his successors, and other ministers throughout the backcountry of North Carolina. Gordon Wood noted in his book, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* that ‘families everywhere built up local networks of kin and used them in politics’.¹⁰ This was true for the New Bern region of North Carolina of which Wood had written, but it was equally true in the backcountry of North Carolina, where Craighead and about 75 families settled.

Many of the families under the leadership of Craighead moved down to North Carolina together from Pennsylvania. Governor Arthur Hobbs described these families in a letter written to the Board of Trade in London:

There are at present 75 families on my lands I viewed betwixt 30 and 40 of them, and except two there was not less than 5 or 5 to 10 children in each family, each going barefooted in their shifts in the warm weather, no woman wearing more than a shift

⁹ James Geddes Craighead, *The Craighead Family: A Genealogical Memoir of the Descendants of Rev. Thomas and Margaret Craighead, 1658-1876* (Philadelphia: SN, 1876), pp. 35.

¹⁰ Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), p. 48.

and one thin petticoat; they are a colony from Ireland removed from Pennsylvania, of what we call Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who with others in the neighboring Tracts has settled together *in order to have a teacher of their own opinion and choice*.¹¹

That teacher of their opinion and choice was Craighead. In August 1766, Reverend Andrew Morton described Craighead and his followers in a letter written to the secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in London that:

The inhabitants of Mecklenburg are entire dissenters of the most rigid kind – That they had a solemn leag[u]e and covenant teacher settled among them That they were in general greatly averse to the Church of England – and that they looked upon a law lately enacted in this province for the better establishment of the Church as oppressive as the Stamp Act and were determined to prevent its taking place there, by opposing the settlement of any Minister of the Church of England that might be amongst them – In short it was very evident that in Mecklenburg County I could be of little use to the honorable Society and I thought it but prudent to decline embroiling myself with an infatuated people to no purpose and trusting that the Venerable Society, upon a just representation of the matter would not be dissatisfied with my conduct.¹²

This description of Craighead and his parishioners reveal the deep-rooted convictions of Scottish covenanting political theology throughout Charlotte and the surrounding area.

Many settlers from Pennsylvania came to this region seeking affordable land and most were Presbyterian. These settlers established the first Presbyterian community in the Piedmont region of North Carolina later named Mecklenburg County around 1750. Here they started seven churches between 1756 and 1770, which were later

¹¹ 'Letter from Governor Dobbs to the Board', 24 August 1755, *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. V, ed. Williams T. Saunders (Raleigh: Joseph Daniels, 1887) pp. 355-6. [italics mine]

¹² 'Letter from Mr Andrew Morton to the Secretary', 25 August 1766', in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. VII, ed. William L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1890), p. 253.

known as the 'Seven Sisters'. By 1766, Charlotte and the surrounding area had approximately 1,000 residents and by the time of the first census in 1790, Mecklenburg Country grew exponentially to 11,395.¹³

Other ministers sent down from Pennsylvania supported covenanting political theology and taught similar ideals as those of Craighead, such were Elihu Spencer and Alexander McWhorter. In 1764, the Synod of New York and Pennsylvania sent Spencer and McWhorter on a mission to North Carolina to help establish churches in the western backcountry.¹⁴ Before the Stamp Act, like most other Presbyterian ministers, Spencer supported the crown. For example, in a letter written as moderator of the Presbyterian Church, he urged the church members to 'honour your king, and pay a due submission to his august parliament' and 'to strengthen the hands of government, to demonstrate on every proper occasion your undissembled love for your mother country, and your attachment to her true interest'.¹⁵ But, his support for the British government waned leading up to and during the Revolution as he later joined the American cause and served as a chaplain for the Continental Army.¹⁶ Similarly, McWhorter supported the American cause.¹⁷ In 1775 and 1776, ministers

¹³ *U.S. Census, 1790: Heads of Families, at the First Census of the United States taken in the year 1790 – North Carolina* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), pp. 8, 64-178 – See Appendix 1.

¹⁴ *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod, 1706-1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1904), p. 339-340, 344-355.

¹⁵ 'Pastoral Letter from Elihu Spencer, May 30th, 1766', in the Alexander MacWhorter Papers, #1235-z, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; this was also published in the *Records of the Presbyterian Church*, pp. 362-363.

¹⁶ Samuel Miller, 'Elihu Spencer, D.D., 1748-1784' in *Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations, From the Early Settlement of the Country to the Close of the Year Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-Five. With Historical Introductions*. Vol. III, ed. William B. Sprague, (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1858), pp. 165-169.

¹⁷ William B. Sprague, 'Alexander McWhorter, D.D., 1758-1807' in *Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations, From the Early Settlement of the Country to the Close of the Year Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-Five. With*

and delegates in North Carolina called upon Spencer and McWhorter to serve in North Carolina to assist in getting the loyalists to join in the cause for independence.¹⁸ It was through these families and relationships that ideas of resistance prompted deliberate calls for rebellion against the crown.

John Winthrop, Roger Williams, Solomon Stoddard, Jonathan Edwards, and George Whitefield are a few of the names that quickly come to mind for historians studying early-American religious history. For many, the New England revivals of the mid-eighteenth century became the focal point of religious history in colonial America. Students read and study Edwards's sermon 'Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God' to exemplify a sermon representative for this Great Awakening period. These revivals were vital and their effects far-reaching for the conversion of souls throughout the American colonies and Great Britain. Yet, historians have neglected the men who preached not only sermons for revival, but also sermons for revolution.

From this period, historians often overlooked leaders such as Alexander Craighead, Samuel Davies, Henry Pattillo, David Caldwell, and Samuel Eusebius McCorkle. I cannot argue that these men were somehow more important than the ones named above. However, the people throughout the backcountry of Virginia and North Carolina certainly felt their influence leading up to and during the American Revolution. A substantial amount of literature exists for the New England ministers listed above. For example, the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University has digitised Edwards's entire collection of writings, sermons, diaries, and manuscripts,

Historical Introductions. Vol. III, ed. William B. Sprague, (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1858), pp. 208-215.

¹⁸ Wellenreuther, 'From the Past to the Future of the "American Israel"', pp. 92-93.

which provides 73 total volumes.¹⁹ Whereas, we have much less to study from the ministers in North Carolina as their writings are scarce due to loss or destruction by fires.²⁰ Because of this, many historians often overlook or neglect them and their contribution due to the lack of extant sermons, manuscripts, or diaries. Which is why they require further investigation and study.

While the ministers in the New England colonies wrestled with the Old Side—New Side debates, and the citizens later engaged in a war with Great Britain, a small and quiet hamlet in the western piedmont and hills of North Carolina was beginning to take shape. Around 1755, the citizens formed a town later named Charlotte for Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz in honour of King George III's wife, who became Queen Consort in 1761. Likewise, they named the county Mecklenburg after the region in Germany from where she came.²¹ Two decades after the inhabitants established Charlotte, this discreet village grew into a boisterous hot-bed for the cause of independence and revolution against the monarchy of Great Britain.

Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton in his re-telling of the conflicts between the British and Americans in the southern theatre was forthright regarding how the people in the backcountry of North Carolina felt and acted against the British. Of all the

¹⁹ To see the complete collection, please visit <http://edwards.yale.edu/>. According to the FAQ section, the center published 26 volumes in print, and provides an additional 47 digital volumes, bringing the total to 73 volumes.

²⁰ Walter Neely, a local historian with Steele Creek Presbyterian Church informed me that due to a fire in 1888, all church records, sermons, and library were destroyed by fire. David Caldwell's entire library and collection of sermons, except one were destroyed by British forces in 1781, see E.W. Caruthers, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D.D.: Near Sixty Years Pastor of the Churches of Buffalo and Alamance* (Greensborough, NC: Swaim and Sherwood, 1842), p. 183 & 223.

²¹ William Henry Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina, historical and biographical. Illustrative of the principles of a portion of her early settlers* (New York: Robert Carter, 1846), p. 33.

counties and places throughout the colonies listed as being hostile to Great Britain, why did Tarleton and officers look at Mecklenburg and Rowan counties as the most hostile? I argue that the answer to this question was in the political theology of the radical Presbyterians who were prevalent throughout this region. Therefore, the primary aim of this thesis is to demonstrate how the Covenanters' political theology of resistance contributed to the American Revolution in the backcountry of North Carolina.

This project examines the Covenanters' political thought and considers its transmission in Scotland and throughout the American Colonies with a focus particularly on the backcountry of North Carolina. By seeing the development of beliefs and political cultures, this study revises our understanding of the political implications of Scottish Covenantalism in colonial America. Through the social network and correspondence of clergymen between Scotland, Ireland, and America, Covenantalism became a driving force in religious orthodoxy among theologians and pastors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and interjected itself throughout diverse Atlantic political cultures.²² This thesis examines how 'radical' Presbyterians of the southern colonies used their pulpits not only for conversions, but also as lecterns for the articulation of political ideas. This project brings together the

²² Andrew Hook, *Scotland and America: A Study of Cultural Relations, 1750-1835*, 2nd ed. (Glasgow: Humming Earth, 2008); William Brock, *Scotus Americanus: A Survey of the Sources for the links between Scotland and American in the Eighteenth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh university Press, 1982); Richard B. Sher and Jeffrey R. Smitten, eds., *Scotland and America in the Age of the Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990); Harold P. Simonson, 'Jonathan Edwards and His Scottish Connections' in the *Journal of American Studies* 21, no. 3 (December 1987), pp. 353-376; Kenneth P Minkema, Adriaan C. Neele, and Kelly van Andel, eds., *Jonathan Edwards and Scotland* (Edinburgh: Dunedin Academic Press, 2011); Christopher Wayne Mitchell, 'Jonathan Edward's Scottish Connection and the Eighteenth-Century Scottish Evangelical Revival, 1735-1750' (PhD Thesis, University of St Andrews, 1998); and Michael J. Crawford, 'New England and the Scottish Revivals of 1742' in *American Presbyterian* 69, no. 1 (Spring, 1991), pp. 23-32.

intellectual and the ecclesiastical for a more comprehensive understanding of the political thought and strategies within several colonies that later supported and became active participants in the American Revolution.

The political theology of the Covenanters reveals that their behaviour and methods for participating in the political discourse of the American Revolution and the period preceding it were in fact intentional and deliberate. The evidence shows that the Covenanters did not separate their theology from their politics but used their theology to promote their politics. A secondary outcome expands our understanding of the intellectual history of the American Revolution to properly include more of the thirteen colonies and not limit the so-called enlightenment narrative to New England as others have contended. This thesis thus contributes to knowledge by further illuminating the religious dimensions of political thought and action in the Atlantic world by shifting focus from the religious sinews of revolutionary thought and action in the northern colonies during the American Revolution to the lower southern colonies.

Some historians have argued that the American Revolution was a response to Enlightenment ideology. Others interpreted the American Revolution as an economic and class upheaval against mercantilism and that the free enterprise of the founders promoted the call for independence. Some focused more on the social aspects of the Revolution and determined that it was transformative and a ‘radical’ shift of culture and society. Yet, others saw the Revolution as a war of religion.²³ The aim of this

²³ Henry F. May, *The Enlightenment in America*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Robert Ferguson, *The American Enlightenment, 1750-1820*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994); Caroline Winterer, *American Enlightenments: Pursuing Happiness in the Age of Reason*, (New

thesis is not to generate a new intellectual interpretation of the American Revolution; rather, the focus is to complement these existing interpretations. This thesis enhances the wider story of the American Revolution and demonstrates three conclusions. First, I hope to recover the link between covenanting thought and the American Revolution. The second aim is to demonstrate that the religious story of the American Revolution was not just a New England story. Finally, I intend to illustrate that the transatlantic ideological origins of the Revolution were not just 'English'.²⁴

Religious History in America: A Historiography

Some historians have written volumes regarding the role of religion in the American Colonies and Revolution.²⁵ When considering a history pertaining to the role of religion within the American Colonies, one must certainly look to Alan Heimert's, *Religion and the American Mind*. Heimert's scholarship forged the path of understanding the importance that religion played in the American Revolution and the

Haven: Yale University Press, 2016); For a glimpse specific to the Scottish Enlightenment's influence in America, see Richard B. Sher and Jeffrey R. Smitten, eds. *Scotland and America in the Age of Enlightenment*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990); Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1913) [Reprinted Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 2004]; Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1993); and J.C.D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660-1832: Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

²⁴ Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, enlarged edition, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1967, 1992), pp. 30-34.

²⁵ Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 2nd ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in America, updated edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Keith L. Griffin, *Revolution and Religion: American Revolutionary War and the Reformed clergy* (New York: Paragon House, 1994); Nathan O. Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1977); Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966); Mark A. Noll, *The Old Religion in the New World: The History of North American Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002); and C. Gregg Singer, *A Theological Interpretation of American History*, revised edition. (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2009).

time preceding it.²⁶ Like Perry Miller, Heimert interpreted that religion promoted the ideas of rebellion and resistance, specifically within Calvinist tradition.²⁷ However, Heimert's primary arguments focused on the broad strokes of 'Calvinism' and 'liberalism' and predominantly demonstrated bias towards New England source material. In addition, Heimert relied upon Jonathan Edwards as the primary influencer to the Calvinist clergy. Heimert examined loosely the role of Presbyterians and correctly argued that the call for revolution and independence came out of the Presbyterian debates of the 1740s and not so much out of the struggles of the 1760s.²⁸ However, even this seminal work gave little attention to the Covenanters and their political theology. In respect to this, my thesis focuses on examining Covenanter ideology and the role that it played during this period.

Focusing specifically on the Presbyterians in Colonial America, Leonard Trinterud defined its origins through 'English Puritanism and Scottish Presbyterianism'.²⁹ He methodically traced the lines from England and Scotland (by way of Ireland) with a broad brush, but again gave scant insight into Scottish covenanting thought. Like Heimert and Trinterud, James Smylie focused on Calvinism more broadly, but neglected the role of the Covenanters specifically. However, he did make a broad comparison of the US Constitution as a covenant document.³⁰ For example, Smylie

²⁶ A very comprehensive historiographical essay regarding Heimert's work is Phillip Goff's, 'Revivals and Revolution: Historiographic Turns Since Alan Heimert's "Religion and the American Mind"' *Church History*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (Dec 1988), pp. 695-721.

²⁷ Perry Miller, 'From the Covenant to the Revival' in *The Shaping of American Religion*, eds James Ward Smith and A Leland Jamison (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 325-327, 333.

²⁸ Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind*, p. 12.

²⁹ Leonard J. Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition: A Re-Examination of Colonial Presbyterianism* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1949), p. 15.

³⁰ James H. Smylie, 'America's Political Covenants, the Bible and Calvinists', *The Journal of Presbyterian History* 75, no 3 (Fall 1997), pp. 153-165.

pointed out how ministers from a Calvinist tradition ‘embraced the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States as part of God’s covenantal relationship with humankind, perhaps indicating that the whole world may have been groaning, to borrow Paul’s term, for the appearance of the new nation’.³¹

Historians typically focused on the prominence of Calvinist theology within the colonial period and its influence on social and cultural movements, such as revivals and the Great Awakening that took place on both sides of the Atlantic during the mid-eighteenth century. Leigh Eric Schmidt, Christopher Mitchell, and Marilyn Westerkamp chronicled revivals and sermons of this period very well. Schmidt made considerable inroads in understanding the Scottish influence on matters pertaining to revivalism and communions in the Great Awakening. His book, not written with a view to illuminate the political history of the Revolution, provided insight on the correspondence between the Scottish and American divines on matters of theology and conversion. His summary of the Covenanters as ‘fiercely Scottish and Presbyterian’ and being ‘suspicious of all things English and Anglican’ shed light on the underlying motivation for their resistance and rebellion in the colonies.³² Mitchell explored specifically the connection between Jonathan Edwards and a number of Scottish Divines during the Great Awakening.³³ Westerkamp’s book, *The Triumph of Laity* focused on the ritual of revival within a cultural context and neglected to consider the theological results.³⁴ Regardless, this area requires further research to

³¹ Smylie, ‘America’s Political Covenants, the Bible and Calvinists’, p. 154.

³² Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the making of American Revivalism*, 2nd edition, (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001.), p. 33.

³³ Christopher Wayne Mitchell, *Jonathan Edwards’s Scottish Connection and the Eighteen-Century Scottish Evangelical Revival, 1735-1750* (St Andrews: St Andrews Press, 1998).

³⁴ Marilyn J. Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity: Scots-Irish Piety and the Great Awakening, 1625-1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 9-10.

show adequately the extent in which revivals played a role in the dissemination of politics during this period.

Gordon Wood noted that ‘the relation of religion to the American Revolution has always been a problem’.³⁵ He asserted that ‘historians have tended to reduce religion to its role in politics or have decided that religion does not have much to do with the Revolution at all’.³⁶ He later quoted Jon Butler from his work, *Awash in a Sea of Faith* that ‘at its heart, the Revolution was a profoundly secular event’.³⁷ He also pointed to Bernard Bailyn’s argument that the American Revolution was primarily political, even though religion was prevalent throughout the colonies and in the colonial way of life.³⁸ Wood attempted to substantiate his argument by generalising that ‘many of the religious leaders, including the Calvinists, endorsed the Revolution and its enlightened liberal impulses wholeheartedly’.³⁹ Yet, he neglected to give a single citation or reference to who the ‘religious leaders’ were. He struggled to cure this so-called ‘problem’ by sweeping the position of religion under the rug of ‘massive demographic and economic changes taking place in the society’, thus making it secondary to politics.⁴⁰ One cannot fully understand the religious history of the American Revolution by examining only the founders. A fuller comprehension of the religious history of the American Revolution demands examination of the

³⁵ Gordon S. Wood, ‘Religion and the American Revolution’ in *New Directions in American Religious History*, eds. Harry S. Stout and D.G. Hart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 173.

³⁶ Wood, ‘Religion and the American Revolution’, p. 174.

³⁷ Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith*, p. 195.

³⁸ Bernard Bailyn, *Faces of Revolution: Personalities and Themes in the Struggle for American Independence* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), p. 104.

³⁹ Wood, ‘Religion and the American Revolution’, p. 174.

⁴⁰ Wood, ‘Religion and the American Revolution’, p. 181.

neglected, lesser-known religious leaders, such as Alexander Craighead, David Caldwell, Henry Pattillo, Samuel McCorkle, and others.

An additional problem in the religious history of America has been the long-held emphasis on New England as the archetype of the American Colonies as a whole. Westerkamp correctly noted the ‘recurring New England focus’ concerning religious history in Revolutionary America.⁴¹ Thomas Kidd and Nathan O. Hatch demonstrate this prevalent New England bias in some of their works.⁴² Conversely, there has been a shift in scholarship to expand the religious history with a willingness to include the southern colonies before and during the American Revolution as demonstrated in the work of Pauline Maier and Patricia U. Bonomi.⁴³ However, much of the research concerning the religious history in the southern colonies detailed more about religious awakenings and revivals rather than political theology.⁴⁴ Equally important to the religious history in America is the essential historiography of the transnational or transatlantic religious history.

⁴¹ Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity*, p. 10.

⁴² Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Nathan O. Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1977).

⁴³ Pauline Maier, ‘Early Revolutionary Leader in the South and the Problem of Southern Distinctiveness’ in *The Southern Experience in the American Revolution*, eds. Jeffrey J. Crow & Larry E. Tise (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1978), pp. 3-24 and Patricia Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in Colonial America, updated edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁴⁴ Hugh Dussek, ‘Pre-Revolutionary History: Socio-Religious Perspectives on the Scots-Irish and Highland Scots in the Backcountry of North Carolina’ (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Graduate School of Union Institute and University, 2002); Kathleen Halecki, ‘Scottish Ministers, Covenant Theology, and the Idea of the Nation, 1560-1638’, (Unpublished PhD Thesis, Union Institute and University, 2012); and Phillip Mulder, ‘Choosing God’s People: Religious Identity in the era of awakenings’, (PhD thesis, UNC-CH, 1995).

Transnational / Atlantic Religious History: A Historiography

Over the past few decades, scholars have turned their attention to Scotland and its influence on the United States. For example, in 2001, Arthur Herman published a popular history, *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Scots Invention of the Modern World* where he set out how Scottish ingenuity formed and forged the ‘modern world’.⁴⁵ Herman’s text was not the starting point in this argument, as an interest in the relationship between Scotland and America was prevalent in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries, which favourably connected these two nations. These histories focused on the cultural, intellectual, or social connections between Scotland and America, but few gave detailed insight concerning the influence of Scottish covenanting theology on the American Revolution.⁴⁶ Gideon Mailer, in the footnotes of his work *John Witherspoon’s American Revolution* noted that the ‘specific model that Anglo-Scottish covenants offered to Americans during the colonial and Revolutionary era has received relatively little attention’.⁴⁷ David Hackett Fischer provided one of the finest cultural summaries of the transatlantic relationship between North Britain and the backcountry of the colonies. In his chapter, ‘Borderlands to the Backcountry’, he detailed how ‘incessant violence shaped the culture of the border region’, which consisted of five counties of southern Scotland and five counties of Ulster. Fischer articulately summarised how these same counties directly influenced

⁴⁵ Arthur Herman, *The Scottish Enlightenment: The Scots invention of the Modern World* (London: Fourth Estate, 2001).

⁴⁶ Duncan Bruce, *The Mark of the Scots: Their Astonishing Contributions to History, Science, Democracy, Literature and the Arts* (Secaucus, New Jersey: Birch Lane Press, 1997); Andrew Hook, *Scotland and America: A Study of Cultural Relations, 1750-1835*, 2nd Edition (Glasgow: Humming Earth, 2008); Alexander Murdoch, *Scotland and America, c. 1600-1800* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010); and Richard Sher and Jeffrey R. Smitten, *Scotland and America in the Age of the Enlightenment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992).

⁴⁷ Gideon Mailer, *John Witherspoon’s American Revolution: Enlightenment and Religion from the Creation of Britain to the Founding of the United States*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017), p. 21.

the culture in the backcountry of North Carolina.⁴⁸ George Black and David Dobson also provided examples of the relationship between Scotland and America.⁴⁹ They focused primarily on immigration and the influence of individuals from Scotland upon America, but neither gave an explicit focus on the Colonial and Revolutionary periods.

Similarly, a number of transatlantic histories examined the greater Atlantic History, but focused on broader concepts and not specific themes.⁵⁰ For example, Daniel Howe gave a summary of the historiography of the Scottish Enlightenment's connection to the American Revolution, but his article overlooked the political theology of the time.⁵¹ Likewise, Alan Gibson noted that 'scholars who have argued for the centrality of the ideas of the Scottish Enlightenment on the American Founding have not set forth detailed methodological writings that document their approach to the study of political thought'.⁵² In a similar manner, Emily Moberg Robinson plainly considered the transatlantic concept of the Covenanters' identity whilst neglecting to fully articulate the Covenanters' political theology.⁵³ The best work available concerning the transatlantic examination of ecclesiastical politics was

⁴⁸ David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 605-782.

⁴⁹ George Fraser Black, *Scotland's Mark on America* (New York: The Scottish Section of 'America's Making', 1921) and David Dobson, *Emigration to Colonial America, 1607-1785* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2004).

⁵⁰ Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) and Carl Bridenbaugh, *Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities and Politics* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1962).

⁵¹ Daniel Walker Howe, 'European Sources of Political Ideas in Jeffersonian America', in *Reviews in American History*, 10, no 4, (Dec 1982), pp. 28-44.

⁵² Alan Gibson, *Interpreting the Founding: Guide to the Enduring Debates over the Origins and Foundations of the American Revolution*, 2nd ed. (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2009), p. 39.

⁵³ Emily Moberg Robinson, 'Scottish Covenanters and the Creation of an American Identity', *Journal of Presbyterian History* 83, no 1 (March 2005), pp. 54-70.

J.C.D. Clark's, *The Language of Liberty*.⁵⁴ Although W. B. Allen criticised Clark's interpretation and wrote that he 'exaggerated the transformation of American evangelism into political utopianism through the American Revolution', this thesis contends that Clark's assessment of the American Revolution, as a war of religion was accurate.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, Clark's work lacked a detailed focus on the Covenanters and their influence on ecclesiastical polity. While historians limited the transatlantic relationship between Scotland and America more to the Scottish Enlightenment and neglected the strong theological connections between these two countries, this thesis anticipates providing a slight cure for this deficiency.

Covenanters: A Historiography

Historians have produced a considerable number of histories and biographies concerning the Covenanters within their Scottish context. These focused on the political influence and upheaval of the times, such as those by John Coffey, Ian Cowan, Raymond Paterson, Scott Spurlock, and David Stevenson. The predominant focus of their histories has been the political or cultural influence of the Covenanters.⁵⁶ In a similar manner, some historians have written accounts concerning the Irish Covenanters and their political contributions such as those by A. R. Holmes,

⁵⁴ J.C.D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660-1832: political discourse and social dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

⁵⁵ W. B. Allen, 'The Language of Liberty, 1660-1832' (Review), *Religion and Liberty* 6, no 1, para. 6. online < <http://www.acton.org/pub/religion-liberty/volume-6-number-1/language-liberty-1660-1832>>, accessed 25 November 2013; Clark, *The Language of Liberty*, p. 304.

⁵⁶ John Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1997); Colin Kidd, 'Conditional Britons: The Scots Covenanting Tradition and the Eighteenth-century British State' *The English Historical Review* 117 (474), (2002), pp. 1147-1176; V. G. Kiernan, 'The Covenanters: A Problem of Creed and Class' in *History from below: studies in popular protest and popular ideology in honour of George Rudé*, ed, Frederick Krantz (Montreal: Concordia University, 1985), pp. 95-116; R. Scott Spurlock, *Cromwell and Scotland: Conquest and Religion 1650-1660* (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, Ltd, 2007); David Stevenson, *Revolution and Counter Revolution, 1644-51* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2003); and David Stevenson, *The Scottish Revolution, 1637-1644: The Triumph of the Covenanters* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1973).

Ian McBride, and Rankin Sherling.⁵⁷ Holmes has explained that by willingly signing the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, the Presbyterians in Ireland bound themselves ‘to establish a uniformity of Presbyterian religion throughout the British Isles and to extirpate popery, prelacy, and heresy’.⁵⁸ He also summarised the Covenanters’ political theology within Ulster as:

[T]he basic principles of mid-seventeenth-century Presbyterianism – the political implication of true religion, the supremacy of Christ over the nations, Christ the sole head of the Church, a strong understanding of God’s sovereignty, a millennial drive that manifested itself in social and political reform and the rights of individual conscience.⁵⁹

Out of this understanding, the Irish Covenanters’ political theology reinforced their opposition to state authority, Episcopacy, and Catholicism and promoted ideals of individual liberty. Ian McBride has written that Ulster Presbyterians’ ‘hostility to government flowed naturally from their refusal to submit to the ecclesiastical authority of the Church’.⁶⁰ He later wrote:

The potentially explosive element in the Presbyterian idea of polity... was the insistence on Christ’s headship of the church according to the two-kingdoms doctrine. Church and State constituted separate but complementary spheres. While the civil magistrate was invested with power over external actions, Jesus Christ was sole ‘sovereign in his own house’, and the government, discipline, and doctrine of the Church has been entrusted to his ministers alone.⁶¹

⁵⁷ A.R. Holmes, ‘Covenanter Politics: Evangelicalism, Political Liberalism and Ulster Presbyterians, 1798–1914’ in *English Historical Journal* (2010), pp. 340-369; Ian McBride, *Scripture Politics: Ulster Presbyterians and Irish Radicalism in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); and David Wilson, *Ulster Presbyterians in the Atlantic World: Religion, Politics and Identity* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2006); and Rankin Sherling, ‘Selective Remembrance: Scottish sensibilities and forgotten Irish contributions to Reformed Presbyterianism in America’ in *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, (May 2013), pp. 158-176.

⁵⁸ Andrew R. Holmes, ‘Presbyterian Religion, Historiography, and Ulster Scots Identity, c. 1800-1914 in *The Historical Journal* 52, no. 3 (Sept. 2009), p. 616. (615-640)

⁵⁹ Holmes, ‘Covenanter Politics’, p. 345.

⁶⁰ McBride, *Scripture Politics*, p. 91.

⁶¹ McBride, *Scripture Politics*, p. 92.

The Scottish Covenanters built upon the understanding that an individual's relationship to God mimicked the understanding of a nation's relationship to God. The Irish Covenanters followed suit. McBride expanded upon this further and declared that 'Irish Presbyterians and American colonists belonged to the same intellectual, cultural, and political world'.⁶² Rankin Sherling, agreeing with McBride, wrote that 'Irish, not Scottish, ministers were largely responsible for founding, building, and sustaining a church for Covenanters in America'.⁶³ Although this thesis primarily focuses on the Scottish influence, there is clearly an equally important connection with the Irish Covenanters.

Current historians have increased their examination of the Covenanters from an American perspective.⁶⁴ However, many focused on the Covenanters through the lens of their theology *or* their politics. As this thesis explores the role resistance played within 'radical' Presbyterianism and investigates its progression from the seventeenth-century Scottish model to the eighteenth-century American colonial model, there must be an accurate understanding of 'radicalism' as it pertained to the Covenanters. Many texts exist concerning the so-called 'radicalism' of the American Revolution. Gordon Wood's, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* remains the chief text regarding this topic.⁶⁵ Wood received considerable criticism from reviewers

⁶² McBride, *Scripture Politics*, p. 118.

⁶³ Sherling, 'Selective Remembrance', p. 159.

⁶⁴ Joseph S. Moore, *Founding Sins: How a Group of Antislavery Radicals Fought to Put Christ into the Constitution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); Lila McGeachy Ray, 'Alexander Craighead: With Drawn Sword' (Unpublished MA Thesis, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 2001); Emily Moberg Robinson, 'Immigrant Covenanters'; and Valerie Wallace, 'Exporting radicalism within the Empire: Scots Presbyterian political values in Scotland and British North America, c.1815-c.1850' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2009).

⁶⁵ Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991). I recognize fully that the term 'radical' as J.C.D. Clark pointed out is a nineteenth-century 'innovation in political vocabulary', see Clark, *The Language of Liberty*, p. 143.

concerning his work. For example, Michael Zuckerman described Wood's book as 'a profoundly unpersuasive story. It cannot be squared with the secondary literature, and it cannot be squared with its own evidence either'.⁶⁶ Another reviewer wrote that 'Wood's angle of vision, for all of its sweeping breadth, ironically serves to produce a curiously flattened, one dimensional view of the early republic that can be as baffling as it is troubling'.⁶⁷ Regardless of the criticism, the primary idea noted that 'if we measure the radicalism by the amount of social change that actually took place... then the American Revolution was not conservative at all; on the contrary: it was as radical and revolutionary as any in history'.⁶⁸ Wood's work asserted a social understanding of what radicalism was in the American Colonies. Gordon Wood further noted that the American Revolution was radical because of its subtlety within a society and that to be an American was a 'matter of common belief and behavior'.⁶⁹ As the remainder of this thesis will exhibit, this so-called radicalism of the Covenanters was anything but subtle. From the perspective of religious history, some interpreted the term radical with a two-fold meaning. Some aspects of the term focused on how pastors led acts of worship or revivals. Regarding the emotional revivals in the colonial era, Alan Taylor noted that there were further divisions amongst the Old and New Lights into 'moderates and radicals'. Taylor also rightly noted that these radicals presented a unique perspective to politics in a manner counter to their objective. This perspective was on the importance of individualism.⁷⁰ The significance of individualism was vital

⁶⁶ Michael Zuckerman, 'Rhetoric, Reality, and the Revolution: The Genteel Radicalism of Gordon Wood', a review of *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* by Gordon S. Wood, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, Vol. 51, No. 4 (Oct., 1994), pp. 693-702

⁶⁷ Drew R. McCoy, a review of *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* by Gordon S. Wood, *The Journal of American History* 79, issue 4, (March 1993), pp. 1563-1564.

⁶⁸ Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, First Vintage Books Edition, March 1993 (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), p. 5.

⁶⁹ Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, p. 336.

⁷⁰ Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), pp. 353-354.

to understanding the American Covenanters' interpretation of covenant theology and their justification for rebellion.

The terms radical, radicalism, or radical Presbyterianism, for the purposes of this thesis, pertain to the ecclesiological understanding within covenanting thought and its impact on civil government. As James Bradley has written, 'the dissenters appealed to the spiritual nature of the church, ecclesiology for them was far more than a theological issue of proper polity, ... Just as with an individual's conscience, chapel polity was a practical political matter with profound implications for civil government'.⁷¹ Although Bradley's essay focused on dissenters throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland and not specifically on the Covenanters, this brief description rightly captured the essence of radicalism within covenanting thought in America in the late-eighteenth century. Bradley also wrote that 'the Covenanting tradition... provides limited resources for the study of late-eighteenth-century radicalism'.⁷² Furthermore, James Rodgers rightly noted that the 'essential characteristics of American radicalism that emerged from the Revolution involved a curious and even ambiguous mingling of secular and religious ideas'.⁷³ This thesis aims in small measure to fill this gap. Radicalism within covenanting thought was evident in America through the propensity against 'popery' and the evolving interpretation of resistance theory.⁷⁴ Although Covenantalism was a majority viewpoint in Scotland,

⁷¹ James E. Bradley, 'The Religious Origins of Radical Politics in England, Scotland, and Ireland, 1662-1800' in *Religion and Politics in Enlightenment Europe*, eds. James E. Bradley and Dale K. Van Kley, (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), p. 190.

⁷² Bradley, 'The Religious Origins of Radical Politics', p. 206.

⁷³ James Rodgers, 'The Religious Origins of American Radicalism and the Ideological Roots of Intentional Communities' in *Revue Française d'études Américaines*, no. 2, American Radicalism: How Radical? (Octobre 1976), p. 26.

⁷⁴ Bradley, 'The Religious Origins of Radical Politics', pp. 214 & 229, Bradley rightly noted that "Popery", in short, is the use of force in the affairs of the church'. He also pointed out that 'the concept of "popery" was also broadened to embrace the Anglican establishment'.

new interpretations of covenant in the Colonies quickly propelled some to the radical fringe. The Covenanters' biblical justification for resistance against a tyrant king or leader was another concept that later affected the American Revolution. Although a sizable number of works exist chronicling the various aspects of the Covenanters' history, my thesis proposes to clarify its history and demonstrate how the Covenanters' theology entwined with their politics specifically in North Carolina.

North Carolina: A Historiography

The crux of my research analyses how some Presbyterian ministers throughout Scotland and the colonies established the practice of politics through the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries with a specific examination of North Carolina. Through a case study of North Carolina, this project will examine the implications of political thought within covenant theology and evaluate how these ideas disseminated through the church and civic leadership leading up to and during the American Revolution. In no way can one assume or assert that what occurred in North Carolina was somehow representative of the whole of the American Colonies, but it serves as a test case for understanding the covenanting ideology as a contributor to the American Revolution.

Pauline Maier and Marjoleine Kars have provided insight into the southern colonies in the period immediately preceding the American Revolution.⁷⁵ However, their works lacked an examination of the Covenanters and the political theology in the backcountry of the southern colonies. Much of the scholarship has focused on the migration or movement of Scottish culture into the Carolinas. For example, Alan

⁷⁵ Maier, 'Early Revolutionary Leader in the South and the Problem of Southern Distinctiveness' and Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

Watson's concise book on *Society in Colonial North Carolina* succinctly provided the details regarding rapid population increase in the mid- to late-eighteenth century, which primarily consisted of 'English, the Scots, and Scotch-Irish, and Germans'.⁷⁶ Similarly, A. Roger Ekirch provided details regarding the rapid influx of immigrants into North Carolina in his important '*Poor Carolina*': *Politics and Society in colonial North Carolina, 1729-1776*. In his work, he detailed that 'after 1750 thousands of new settlers came overland from the north, most of them dissenting Protestants – Presbyterians, Baptists, Quakers, and Moravians – from Pennsylvania'.⁷⁷ These Pennsylvania Presbyterians are the focus of my thesis. Although Ekirch's book is appealing to know and understand much of the Cape Fear region of North Carolina, it proved lacking concerning the backcountry of North Carolina. In chapter 2 regarding Carolina society and culture, he noted that 'Presbyterian congregations were mostly concentrated in the Upper Cape Fear county of Cumberland, where many Scottish Highlanders settled'.⁷⁸ Yet, he failed to provide any commentary concerning the significant concentration of Presbyterians in the western Piedmont of North Carolina. Alice L. Bordsen provided colourful details concerning the migration of Scots to America and specifically North Carolina in her important article, 'Scottish Attitudes', where she noted that 'Charlotte was to form the political and religious center' for the Ulster-Scots moving into the region.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Alan D. Watson, *Society in Colonial North Carolina*, (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History, 1996), p. 4.

⁷⁷ A. Roger Ekirch, '*Poor Carolina*': *Politics and Society in colonial North Carolina, 1729-1776*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp. 6-7.

⁷⁸ Ekirch, '*Poor Carolina*', p. 29.

⁷⁹ Alice L. Bordsen, 'Scottish Attitudes Reflected in the Library History of North Carolina' in *Libraries & Culture* 27, no 2 (Spring 1992), p. 128.

Emily Robinson presented ‘a comparative, trans-Atlantic study of immigrant Covenanters’ and examined ‘the role of historical memory in framing Covenanter identity’.⁸⁰ On a more confined scale, local historians have written a number of books pertaining to the Presbyterians of North Carolina through histories of local churches.⁸¹ Although important in keeping historical records and accounts for the various churches, they lacked the in-depth analysis necessary to comprehend the role of covenanting thought in this region.

Lily McGeachy Ray wrote a detailed MA dissertation in 2001 concerning the prominent American Covenanter, Alexander Craighead.⁸² Apart from this, only family and a few historians in the nineteenth century have written about him.⁸³ Some historians referred to Craighead briefly in larger works pertaining to Presbyterianism and dissenting traditions in America. Yet, they neglected to examine his political theology and his later contribution in North Carolina. Craighead keenly demonstrated his leadership by calling for a *Renewal of the Covenants, National and Solemn League* in Pennsylvania in 1742, and led a few churches in Virginia and later in

⁸⁰ Robinson, ‘Immigrant Covenanters: Religious and Political Identity from Scotland to America’, this quote is from the abstract of her thesis.

⁸¹ John Douglas, *The History of Steele Creek Presbyterian Church, 1745-1978: Mecklenburg County, Charlotte, North Carolina* (Charlotte, NC: Craftsman Printing and Publishing House, 1978), Russell M. Kerr, *The Presbyterian Gathering on Clear Creek: the History of Philadelphia Presbyterian Church, Mint Hill, North Carolina* (Charlotte: Philadelphia Presbyterian Church, 2001), Louise Barber Matthews, *A History of Providence Presbyterian Church, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina* (Charlotte: Providence Presbyterian Church, 2000), Neill Roderick McGeachy, *A History of the Sugaw Creek Presbyterian Church, Mecklenburg Presbytery, Charlotte, North Carolina* (Rock Hill: Record Print Co., 1954), Thomas Hugh Spence, *The Presbyterian Congregation at Rocky River* (Concord, NC: Rocky River Presbyterian Church, 1954).

⁸² Lily McGeachy Ray, ‘Alexander Craighead: With Drawn Sword’ (Unpublished MA Thesis, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 2001).

⁸³ Earnest S. Craighead, *Craighead ministers: in Ulster and Colonial America, Scotch-Irish Presbyterian, 1633-1799* (Pittsburgh: ES Craighead, 1954); James Geddes Craighead, *Scotch and Irish Seeds in American Soil the Early History of the Scotch and Irish Churches, and Their Relations to the Presbyterian Church of America* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publications, 1878); James Geddes Craighead, *The Craighead Family: A Genealogical Memoir of the Descendants of Rev. Thomas and Margaret Craighead, 1658-1876* (Philadelphia: SN, 1876).

Mecklenburg County, North Carolina from 1755-1766.⁸⁴ A key component of my thesis is to determine the extent to which Craighead's leadership in North Carolina later led to a sense of covenantal thought as seen in the Mecklenburg Resolves and contributed to the American Revolution throughout the backcountry of North Carolina.

Concerning further implications of political thought and civic duty, some historians have divergent interpretations of the Scots and their loyalty or patriotism in North Carolina. Historians have argued that the Scots in North Carolina were loyalists. Andrew Hook noted that the majority of these loyalists were Scottish Highlanders, and that this was surprising and became 'all the more so when one remembers the conditions at home which had forced these men to leave their native land'.⁸⁵ Mark Noll has supported the notion of the Scots being loyalists due to their 'oaths sworn to the English king'.⁸⁶ Kars, agreeing with Noll, demonstrated how the Regulators remained predominantly loyalists as their rebellion was against local magistrates and not the crown itself.⁸⁷ However, I contend with Carole Troxler that although there were loyalists in eastern North Carolina, some of Scottish heritage in western North Carolina called for resistance.⁸⁸ Furthermore, I agree with Pauline Maier that there was a connection to the number of Presbyterian contributors to the Resolves and the push for revolution in the backcountry of North Carolina.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, pp. 183-193.

⁸⁵ Hook, *Scotland and America*, p. 49.

⁸⁶ Mark Noll, *Christians and the American Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: Christian College Consortium, 1977), p. 118.

⁸⁷ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, pp. 212-214.

⁸⁸ Carole Watterson Troxler, *Farming Dissenters: The Regulator Movement in Piedmont North Carolina* (Raleigh: Office of Archives and History, 2011).

⁸⁹ Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997), pp. 172-177.

Thesis Framework

This thesis consists of eight chapters divided into two parts, the first two chapters make up the section focusing primarily on Scotland. Whereas the remaining chapters three through eight focus on America. The first chapter briefly examines covenant theology through historical and political contexts within Europe and Scotland and its evolution from the late sixteenth century through the eighteenth century.

Covenantalism, through the social network and correspondence of clergymen, became a driving force in religious orthodoxy among theologians and pastors thus interjecting it throughout diverse Atlantic political cultures. Building upon this perception, this thesis examines how radical Presbyterians utilised their pulpits not only for conversions, but also as lecterns of politics. The second chapter examines the Covenanters' theology or theory of resistance. Thinkers of the sixteenth century in Scotland and throughout Europe such as George Buchanan, Christopher Goodman, John Knox, John Ponet, and some from the seventeenth century, such as Samuel Rutherford, Alexander Henderson, James Stewart, and Donald Cargill helped to form and shape this theory.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ George Buchanan, *De Jure Regni apud Scotos; a dialogue concerning the rights of the crown in Scotland*, trans. Robert MacFarlan [reprint of 1799 edition] (Colorado Springs: Portage Publications, Inc. 2009); Christopher Goodman, *How Superior Powers ought to be obeyed of their subjects, and wherein they may lawfully be by God's word disobeyed and resisted* (Geneva, 1558); John Knox, *Against Romish Rites and Political and Ecclesiastical Tyranny, A Faithful Admonition to the Professors of God's Truth in England* (1554) and *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558); John Ponet, *A Short Treatise of politike power, and of the true Obedience which Subjects owe to kynges and other civile Governours* (Strasbourg: 1556; RSTC 20178; facs. Edn Menton; Scholar Press, 1970); and Samuel Rutherford, *Lex, Rex, or the Law and the Prince; a Dispute for the Just Prerogative of King and People: Containing the Reasons and Causes of the Most Necessary Defensive Wars of the Kingdom of Scotland, and of Their Expedition for the Aid and Help of Their Dear Brethren of England; in which Their Innocency is Asserted, and a Full Answer is Given to a Seditious Pamphlet, Entituled, "Sacro-sancta Regum Majestas," or the Sacred and Royal Prerogative of Christian Kings; under the name of J.A., but Penned by John Maxwell ... In forty-four Questions*. [London: 1644] (Colorado Springs, CO: Portage Publications, 2009). Alexander Henderson, 'Instructions for Defensive Arms' in *The History of the Church and State of Scotland from the Ascension of K. Charles I to the Restoration of K. Charles II*, Vol. II, ed.

Although historians covered the theory of resistance extensively, a gap remains in the American covenanting tradition and its specific influence on the American Revolution in the southern colonies. My aim in chapter three will be to examine the American Covenanters' theory of resistance as it related to the Scottish tradition based on political theology. James G. Leyburn noted how the 'Scotch-Irish settlers in the Piedmont and up-country regions in both of the Carolinas became so resentful of the treatment they received at the hands of the aristocrats who ran the government in both colonies that they rose in armed rebellion'.⁹¹ There was a clear connection between the radical Presbyterian influence and the impulse for insurgency. The aim of chapter four seeks to provide insight into the actions prompted by the people of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina to become one of the first regions in the American colonies to outwardly rebel against a local magistrate. Unlike the previous chapters, which examine the justification for resistance theologically and the words that promoted covenanting ideology, this chapter focuses more on the Covenanters' ideas in action as evidenced through brief case studies of skirmishes within what became Mecklenburg County and the Regulator Movement.

Alexander Stevenson (Edinburgh: Booksellers in Town and Country, 1754); James Stewart, *Naphtali, or, The wrestlings of the Church of Scotland for the kingdom of Christ contained in a true and short deduction thereof, from the beginning of the reformation of religion, until the year 1667 : together with the last speeches and testimonies of some who have died for the truth since the year 1660* (Edinburgh: s.n., 1667); James Stewart, *Jus populi vindicatum, or, The peoples right to defend themselves and their covenanted religion vindicated wherein the act of defence and vindication which was interprised anno 1666 is particularly justified ... being a reply to the first part of Survey of Naphtaly &c. / by a friend to true Christian liberty* (London: s.n., 1669) and Donald Cargill, *A true and exact copy of a treasonable and bloody-paper called the Fanaticks new-covenant which was taken from Mr. Donald Cargill at Queens-Ferry the third day of June, anno Dom. 1680 one of their field-preachers, a declared rebel and traitor ; together with their execrable declaration published at the Cross of Sanquhair upon the twenty two day of the said month of June after a solemn procession and singing of Psalms by Cameron the notorious ring-leader of and preacher at their field-conventicles, accompanied with twenty of that wretched crew* (Edinburgh: Printed by Heir of Andrew Anderson, 1680).

⁹¹ James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962), pp. 21-22.

Chapter five demonstrates how Scottish covenanting thought played a dynamic role by making an impact in North Carolina where the Covenanters' theory of resistance promoted rebellion and revolution. This was evident in the Mecklenburg Resolves, the writing of letters and petitions, and in the declarations of many Presbyterian parishioners made on behalf of the Revolution.⁹² General Cornwallis allegedly referred to Charlotte, North Carolina as a 'hornet's nest' and 'the "most rebellious" section in America'.⁹³ Charlotte, and this region in North Carolina, did not become a 'rebellious' and 'hostile' region overnight. This chapter on independence seeks to make a clear connection concerning the number of Presbyterians influencing the Resolves and pushing for revolution in North Carolina. In addition to making the connection, this chapter seeks to provide insight as to what provoked the people of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina to become one of the first regions in the American colonies to call for independence.

Shortly after news of the Battles in Lexington and Concord, the Patriots in western North Carolina banded together in opposition to British rule. They drew on their

⁹² Historians do not dispute the validity of The Mecklenburg Resolves. However, for more detail concerning the debate concerning the Mecklenburg Declaration see: Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (New York: Random House, 1997), pp. 172-177; Scott Syfert, *The First American Declaration of Independence? The Disputed History of the Mecklenburg Declaration of May 20, 1775* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2014).

⁹³ This has been a legend or folklore as there are no specific sources to corroborate that Cornwallis ever coined this phrase. For example, William Henry Foote wrote, 'Cornwallis marched towards Charlotte, that hot-bed of rebellion, that hornet's nest, as his lordship afterwards named it'. See Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, p. 254. In addition, see Harriot W. Warner, *Autobiography of Charles Caldwell, M.D.*, (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Co., 1855), p. 93. However, one historian from 1904 alleged that Tarleton was the one who coined the phrase, please see: William A. Graham, *General Joseph Graham and his papers in North Carolina Revolutionary History* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1904), pp. 84-5. Richard Gardiner, in his thesis, noted that this moniker was evident in a letter from Cornwallis to Balfour, 3 October, 1780, but I have not seen the source document. See footnote 154 in Richard Gardiner, 'The Presbyterian Rebellion: An Analysis of the perception that the American Revolution was a Presbyterian War' (unpublished PhD Thesis, Marquette University, 2005), p. 49.

Scottish covenanting tradition to support violent resistance and revolution against the British leaders before and during the War of Independence. This banding together demonstrated the clear connection of radical Presbyterian influence on the region. Unlike the other chapters, which examine the justification for resistance theologically and the words that promoted covenanting ideas, chapter six focuses on brief case studies of a few battles of the American Revolution and examines the extent that radical Presbyterians contributed to and participated in revolution against the British monarchy in the backcountry of North Carolina. This chapter does not provide an extensive review of warfare or conflict in America.⁹⁴

The American Covenanters in the backcountry of North Carolina, like the Scottish Covenanters placed a high calling upon the social institutions of learning and government. The influence that the Presbyterian Church had on the representative notion of government within the colonial context came about through the Presbyterians' high view of education. The penultimate chapter studies the institutions of education and government and examines the extent covenanting thought contributed to the relationship between education and government in the backcountry of North Carolina. John Knox believed in a strong public education for all people regardless of social status. This high view of education expanded in America through men like Tennent, Davies, Witherspoon, Caldwell, McCorkle, and Pattillo. This ideology later challenged the very understanding of what and how they interpreted and ratified the US Constitution.

⁹⁴ For a detailed examination of NC militia and warfare, see Wayne E. Lee, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina: The Culture of Violence in Riot and War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001).

The last chapter of the thesis briefly peels back the ugly side of the American Covenanters and their inconsistency as it pertained to matters of liberty. As the other chapters demonstrate the ideology of liberty for all, this one focuses on the dilemma of slavery. Some historians have addressed slavery in North Carolina and the southern Colonies, such as Marvin Kay, Lorin Cary, Jon Sensbach, and Charles Irons.⁹⁵ Kay and Cary rightly noted that the Presbyterians prior to the American Revolution ‘were not prone to rock the boat’ concerning slavery.⁹⁶ Likewise, Charles Irons noted that ‘even Samuel Davies, the foremost apostle to the enslaved in Virginia’s early history, distanced himself publicly from the idea of emancipation in order to secure his ministry against accusations that he was subverting the social order. He justified slavery as one of many hierarchical relationships approved by God in a 1757 sermon, *The Duty of Masters to Their Servants*’.⁹⁷ However, Joseph Moore in his work *Founding Sins* recently tackled this topic and argued that the Covenanters ‘were also some of its (America’s) most radical racial egalitarians’.⁹⁸ In addition, William Harrison Taylor and Peter Messer in their edited work, *Faith and Slavery* examined the long history of Presbyterianism’s struggle with slavery. In their book, they demonstrated how ‘context and intent mattered as much as theology or faith in dictating the choices Presbyterians made about slavery and the consequences of those

⁹⁵ Marvin L. Michael Kay and Lorin Lee Cary, *Slavery in North Carolina, 1748-1775*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1995); Jon F. Sensbach, *A Separate Canaan: The Making of an Afro-Moravian World in North Carolina, 1763-1840*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998); and Charles F. Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

⁹⁶ Kay and Cary, *Slavery in North Carolina*, p. 428.

⁹⁷ Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity*, p. 43.

⁹⁸ Joseph S. Moore, *Founding Sins: How a Group of Antislavery Radicals Fought to Put Christ into the Constitution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), pp. 4, 88-118.

choices'.⁹⁹ This chapter supplements these works and seeks to demonstrate how the Covenanters struggled with this dilemma, as many of the Covenanters in North Carolina prior to the early-nineteenth century were slaveholders. Those of the covenanting tradition were ardent advocates and proponents for freedom from tyranny and oppressive governments, and they made many renewals and declarations for the purpose of independence. However, these declarations struggled to denounce and eradicate the oppression of slavery in North Carolina leading up to and during the American Revolution.

Overall, this thesis examines the origins of the Covenanters' political theology in Scotland of the seventeenth-century and seeks to determine the extent of its evolution and the influence on the American Colonies and Revolution. There is a vast array of historiographical literature which examines the relationship or connection between Scotland and America, but as shown above, it is not complete and demands further consideration. Many of the connections between Scotland and America fall within the brackets of social, intellectual, or cultural history, neglecting the religious.

This thesis will demonstrate the interwoven understanding of theology and politics for the Covenanters. By bringing together the intellectual and the ecclesiastical for a more inclusive understanding of their political thought, this revises our understanding of the political implications of theology and reinterprets the role of Scottish covenanting thought in Colonial America.

⁹⁹ William Harrison Taylor and Peter C. Messer, eds. *Faith and Slavery in the Presbyterian Diaspora, Studies in Eighteenth-Century American and the Atlantic World*, (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2016), p. 11.

Chapter 1 – Influence

Roots of Scottish Covenanting Thought

The name for the Covenanters derived from their theology and their understanding of what it meant to be in a relationship with God both individually and collectively. Often the Covenanters' politics illustrated their theology, but in many cases, this political theology lacks explanation. Simply inspecting each point within covenant theology and somehow making them political in nature cannot achieve this, because several aspects within covenant theology are simply not political. As a religious sect within Presbyterianism, the Covenanters, and their influences on diverse interpretations of civil and ecclesiastical polity established radical factions of their political theology. Originating in 1638 when a group of Presbyterians in Scotland signed the National Covenant in Greyfriars Kirkyard, the Covenanters denounced the interference of the monarchy into matters pertaining to the Presbyterian Kirk in Scotland.¹ They later signed the Solemn League and Covenant in 1643.² All Covenanters were Presbyterian, but not all Presbyterians were Covenanters. Leigh Eric Schmidt succinctly articulated in his book *Holy Fairs* that the Covenanters were 'vehement Presbyterians'.³ In addition, he noted they were 'fiercely Scottish and Presbyterian' by 'being suspicious of all things English and Anglican'.⁴ Emily

¹ For a fuller examination into the Covenanters and the National Covenant, see Ian B. Cowan, *The Scottish Covenanters, 1660-1688*, (London: V. Gollancz, 1976); Jock Purces, *Fair Sunshine: Character Studies of the Scottish Covenanters* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1997); and Janette Currie, 'History, Hagiography, and Fakestory: Representations of the Scottish Covenanters in Non-Fictional and Fictional Texts from 1638-1835' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Stirling, 1999).

² For one of the better summaries of the Solemn League and Covenant, see Edward J. Cowan, 'The Solemn League and Covenant' in *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, ed. Roger A. Mason (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, 1987), pp. 182-202.

³ Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the making of American Revivalism*, 2nd edition, (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001.), p. 33.

⁴ Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, p. 33.

Robinson explained that “‘Covenanter’ is a very contested term’, and that this term was a ‘politicized and “theologized” label claimed by several different persuasions of Presbyterians’.⁵

The term ‘Covenanter’ evolved from its inception in Scotland. The Scottish National Covenant was more than theology in practice; it represented a shift in how people comprehended political thought and participated within national politics. Within seventeenth-century Scotland, covenanting thought focused politically on how to limit the monarch. In addition, the early Scottish Covenanters built upon the understanding that an individual’s relationship to God paralleled the understanding of a nation’s relationship to God, such as the relationship that the nation of Israel had with God in the Old Testament. The Covenanters’ justification for resistance in Scotland and Ireland contributed to a proliferation of resistance in the southern colonies in America during the late-eighteenth century.

Background of Scottish Covenanters’ political theology

Quentin Skinner has rightfully established the foundations of modern political thought in the Reformation and that these shaped the influences from Lutheranism and Calvinism.⁶ However, these larger umbrellas of theology do not define the nuances of political theology within various sects, such as the Covenanters under the umbrella of Calvinism. W. Stanford Reid pointed out that ‘the use of the term “Covenanter”’, did not originate with the signers of the 1638 covenant, but ‘as one looks back to the

⁵ Emily Moberg Robinson, ‘Immigrant Covenanters: Religious and Political Identity from Scotland to America’ (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of California, Santa Cruz, 2004), p. 19.

⁶ Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: Volume Two, The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge, 1978).

Protestant Reformation one finds that John Knox developed the doctrine of the covenant in Scotland very clearly, not just as a theological concept, but also as a political theory'.⁷ When interpreting the political theology of the Covenanters historically, the idea was to separate the church from the state. Within Protestantism, this notion certainly had roots in Lutheranism and in early Calvinism and found in later reformed traditions, such as the Covenanters. 'At the base of the structure of Covenanter Politics', according to A. R. Holmes's definition, 'was the conviction that the Presbyterian form of church government most closely approximated with the New Testament model, and that the doctrines upheld by seventeenth-century Covenanters... best reflected the theology of the Bible'.⁸ This definition set the Covenanter politics as ecclesiological and ignored the civil; however, these cannot stand apart. As Robert Emery has correctly written, 'the assertion of Christ's kingship over all things was the fundamental doctrine governing the Covenanter stance on the relationship between church and state'.⁹ It was upon this interpretation of magistracy that the Covenanters' resistance theory was built.

Kingship and Magistracy

The notion or understanding of kingship and magistracy within covenanting thought can be quite cumbersome. As Richard Niebuhr has written, 'when the idea of kingship, for instance, is applied to God something is asserted not only about God but about the king and the idea of human kingship is changed by the metaphysical use of

⁷ W. Stanford Reid, 'John Knox's Theology of Political Government', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1988), p. 529.

⁸ A. R. Holmes, 'Covenanter Politics: Evangelicalism, Political Liberalism and Ulster Presbyterians, 1798–1914' in *English Historical Journal* (2010), p. 345.

⁹ Robert Emery, 'Church and State in the Early Republic: The Covenanters' Radical Critique', *Journal of Law and Religion* 25, no. 2 (2009-2010), p. 491.

the symbol'.¹⁰ Niebuhr rightly asserted that the use of symbols is inescapable, yet these symbols continually evolve. This is true for ideas or symbols of kingship within covenanting thought.¹¹

Many years prior to the National Covenant, George Buchanan provided his interpretation of kingship in his prominent work, *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*. Buchanan established early in the dialogue that 'kings were made not for themselves but for the people'.¹² The crux of Buchanan's argument was the people gave authority to the king; therefore, the people held the king accountable. The greater population carried out this accountability through magistrates, who were appointed by God through the people.¹³ Knox grasped Buchanan's understanding with a very tight grip. In his *Appellation*, he deemed nobility as 'lawful powers appointed by God' and that their duty was to defend him, or they were in rebellion to God.¹⁴ Primarily, this relationship between the king and the people was a 'mutual' agreement or covenant.¹⁵ Hence, this contract required proper protection and defence through the magistrate.

¹⁰ Richard Niebuhr, 'The Idea of Covenant and American Democracy' in *Church History* 23, no. 2, (June 1952), p. 129.

¹¹ For the purposes of this thesis, I focus primarily on the Scottish understanding of kingship, magistracy, tyrannicide, and regicide, but there were others throughout England who held similar sentiments with the Scottish, for example, see: John Milton, *The tenure of kings and magistrates proving that it is lawfull, and hath been held so through all ages, for any who have the power, to call to account a tyrant, or wicked king, and after due conviction, to depose and put him to death if the ordinary magistrate have neglected or deny'd to doe it. And they the, who of late, so much blame deposing, are the men that did it themselves* (London: Matthew Simmons, 1649) For an extensive examination of Kingship in Scotland, see J. H. Burns, *The True Law of Kingship: Concepts of Monarchy in Early-Modern Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

¹² George Buchanan, *De Jure Regni apud Scotos; a dialogue concerning the rights of the crown in Scotland*, trans. Robert MacFarlan [reprint of 1799 edition]. (Colorado Springs: Portage Publications, Inc. 2009), p 10. [Afterwards referred to as *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*]

¹³ *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*, pp. 40, 52, 55-57, & 67-69.

¹⁴ John Knox, *The appellation of John Knox from the sentence pronounced by the bishops and clergy: Addressed to the Nobility and Estates of Scotland* (Geneva, 1558) in *The Works of John Knox*, vol. IV, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1855), pp. 467 & 471. [Afterwards referred to as *Appellation*]

¹⁵ *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*, p. 76 and John Knox, 'The History of the Reformation of Scotland, Book Fourth, 1561-1564' in *The Works of John Knox*, vol. II. ed. David Laing. (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1848), p. 372.

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* provided the standard regarding magistracy for the Covenanters. Specifically, under the heading ‘Of the Civil Magistrate’, chapter 23 stated that:

God, supreme Lord and King of all the world, hath ordained civil magistrates to be under Him, over the people, for His own glory, and the public good; and, to this end, hath armed them with the power of the sword, for the defence and encouragement of them that are good, and for the punishment of evil doers.¹⁶

The biblical basis for this was in Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2. Regardless of this simple paragraph and biblical basis, some Covenanters provided additional commentary and insight of which they disagreed. For example, George Gillespie, one of the Scottish divines within the Westminster Assembly asserted that Christ was the Mediator over the church alone, thus clearly separating the church from the state.¹⁷ Concerning the forms of civil and ecclesiastical government, Gillespie held that magistracy exercised lordly authority and dominion in immediate subordination to God. Ecclesiastical power is ministerial and servant-like, in subordination to Christ as King of the

¹⁶ *The confession of faith and the larger and shorter catechisme first agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and now appointed by the Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland to be a part of uniformity in religion, between the Kirks of Christ in the three kingdomes*, ([Edinburgh]: Amsterdam, printed by Luice Elsever [i.e. Gideon Lithgow], for Andrew Wilson, and are to be sold at his shop in Edinburgh, 1649), p. 50. Accessed *Early English Books Online* on 25 October 2018, [Afterwards WCF, 1646], p. 50 – Spelling modernised

¹⁷ George Gillespie, *A sermon preached before the right honourable the House of Lords in the Abbey Church at Westminster, upon the 27th of August, 1645 being the day appointed for solempne and publique humiliation : whereunto is added a brotherly examination of some passages of Mr. Coleman's late printed sermon upon Job 11.20, in which he hath endeavoured to strike at the root of all church-government* (London: Robert Bostick, 1645), p. 43. For further commentary on Gillespie, see W.D.J. McKay, *An Ecclesiastical Republic: Church Government in the Writings of George Gillespie* (Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 1997).

Church, and in his name and authority.¹⁸ He held to the more traditional understanding with Luther and Calvin regarding the position of the magistrate.¹⁹

Samuel Rutherford held to a slightly more moderate understanding of the magistrate if the nation were in covenant. For example, in *Lex, Rex*, Rutherford wrote, ‘The king, as a man, is not more obliged to the public and regal defence of the true religion than any other man of the land; but he is made by God and the people king, for the church and people of God’s sake, that he may defend true religion for the behalf and salvation of all’.²⁰ In doing this, he elevated the importance of covenant between the king and his subjects, thus introducing a justification for resistance should the king become a tyrant.²¹

James Stewart has provided scores of pages concerning the role of the magistrate in his works, *Naphtali* and more vividly in *Jus Populi Vindicatum, or The People’s*

¹⁸ George Gillespie, *Aaron’s Rod Blossoming; or, The Divine Ordinance of Church Government Vindicated; so as the present Erastian Controversy Concerning the Distinction of Civil and Ecclesiastical Government, Excommunication and Suspension, is fully debated and discussed, from Holy Scripture, from the Jewish and Christian Antiquities, from the Consent of Later Writers, from the Groundlessness of the Chief Objections made against the Presbyterial Government, in point of Domineering Arbitrary Unlimited Power* (Edinburgh: Robert Ogle, and Oliver & Boyd, 1843), p. 86.

¹⁹ For details regarding Luther’s views, see John R. Stephenson, ‘The Two Governments and the Two Kingdoms’ in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 34, no. 4. (1981), pp. 321-337 and Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, Second Edition (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), pp. 205-211. For details concerning Calvin’s views, see John Calvin, *A Sermon of Master John Calvin, upon the First Epistle of Paul, to Timothy, published for the benefit and Edifying the Church of God*, Translated by L. T. (London: G. Bishop, 1579) and McGrath, *Reformation Thought*, pp. 215-217.

²⁰ Samuel Rutherford, *Lex, Rex, or the Law and the Prince; a Dispute for the Just Prerogative of King and People: Containing the Reasons and Causes of the Most Necessary Defensive Wars of the Kingdom of Scotland, and of Their Expedition for the Aid and Help of Their Dear Brethren of England; in which Their Innocency is Asserted, and a Full Answer is Given to a Seditious Pamphlet, Entituled, ‘Sacro-sancta Regum Majestas,’ or the Sacred and Royal Prerogative of Christian Kings; under the name of J.A., but Penned by John Maxwell ... In forty-four Questions*. [London: 1644] (Colorado Springs, CO: Portage Publications, 2009), p. 102. [Afterwards referred to as *Lex, Rex*].

²¹ For a fuller description of Rutherford’s interpretation concerning magistracy, see John Coffey, *Politics, Religion, and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 152-169.

*Right, to defend themselves and their Covenanted Religion, vindicated.*²² Stewart, agreeing with Knox, believed in the mutual relationship or covenant between the people and the magistracy. Likewise, he understood that God appointed magistrates through the people and wrote that:

God hath appointed, besides economical societies, the coalition of people into greater bodies, consisting of many families under one kind of government, and political head, for their mutual good in their necessities, and for protection of the whole body, and every Member thereof: That Magistracy is God's ordinance, he having appointed Superiour Heads and Governours, to rule these bodies that they might be preserved from ruin and destruction.²³

Yet, Stewart took up the mantle from Rutherford and determined 'that where a Covenant is made between a King and a People, the Covenant on the King's part, binds him, not only to God, in relation to the People, as the object of this duty, but doth bind him to the People formally'.²⁴ Therefore, should the king forsake his duty, Stewart deemed that king a tyrant and that resistance was both just and right, but that the one being resisted was the man and not the office.²⁵ In addition to this understanding of magistracy, there are a few other attributes that further define the distinctiveness of Scottish covenanting thought.

²² James Stewart, *Naphtali, or, The wrestlings of the Church of Scotland for the kingdom of Christ contained in a true and short deduction thereof, from the beginning of the reformation of religion, until the year 1667 : together with the last speeches and testimonies of some who have died for the truth since the year 1660* (Edinburgh: s.n., 1667) and James Stewart, *Jus populi vindicatum, or, The peoples right to defend themselves and their covenanted religion vindicated wherein the act of defence and vindication which was interprised anno 1666 is particularly justified ... being a reply to the first part of Survey of Naphtaly &c. / by a friend to true Christian liberty* (London: s.n., 1669) [Afterwards referred to as *Jus Populi*]

²³ *Jus Populi*, p. 81 – spelling modernized.

²⁴ *Jus Populi*, p. 112

²⁵ *Jus Populi*, p. 168.

Reformed

The first attribute that influenced the Covenanters' resistance theory was their Reformed tradition of Calvinism. A vital distinction to understand, the Reformed tradition emerged from the Protestant Reformation. Theologians defined the term 'Reformed' as a biblical response laid out by Huldrych Zwingli, Martin Bucer, and John Calvin to the extremes and distortions of the Roman Catholic Church.²⁶ The Reformers, seeking to return to Scripture, attempted to staunchly rebuild the church upon the teachings of the New Testament. As a result, by affirming Reformed theology, one was rejecting certain other theologies, such as Catholic theology. Historians and theologians have written a considerable amount concerning Calvinism as a system of theology and as an ideology.²⁷ Two primary streams developed out of Calvinism, the Dutch Reformed Tradition and Scottish Calvinism, which became the origin of Presbyterianism.²⁸ It was within the Scottish context that covenanting thought made distinct shifts in interpretation and implementation of resistance.

Adverse

For seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Presbyterians, two primary forms of authority warranted opposition – papacy and tyranny. Scottish Covenanters relied

²⁶ Donald K. McKim, *Introducing the Reformed Faith: Biblical Revelation, Christian Tradition, Contemporary Significance*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001); Richard A. Mueller, *Calvin and the Reformed Tradition: On the Work of Christ and the Order of Salvation*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012) & R. Michael Allen, *Reformed Theology*, (New York: T&T Clark International, 2010).

²⁷ For a fuller examination into Calvinism, please see D.G. Hart, *Calvinism: A History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013), Richard A. Mueller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), and Michael S. Horton, *For Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2011).

²⁸ For a fuller examination in the Dutch Reformed tradition, see David Engelsma, *Always Reforming: Continuation of the Sixteenth-Century Reformation*, ed. David Engelsma (Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2009), Joel R. Beeke, *Doctrinal Standards, Liturgy, and Church Order*, ed. Joel R. Beeke (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 1999) and Peter Ole Grell, *Dutch Calvinists in early Stuart London: the Dutch Church in Austin Friars, 1603-1642* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989)

upon what they believed to be the biblical imperative to resist tyranny. Naturally, this leaned heavily upon the place and purpose of the covenant. In addition, within the view of the Presbyterian Church, the plurality of leaders became the basis of a church's ecclesiological government. As such, Presbyterians deemed the papacy as unbiblical, wrong, and tyrannical. According to the *Westminster Confession of Faith* under the heading 'Of the Church', 'There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, the man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalts himself in the Church, against Christ and all that is called God'.²⁹ Concerning this understanding, Presbyterians opposed the Pope. There was to be no other central leader for the church other than Jesus Christ.

The second area of opposition was any monarchy or government deemed tyrannous. 'Covenanters were fundamentally monarchists', as Craig Gallagher noted, 'albeit monarchists who believed the ideal sovereign was one committed to the defence of the Presbyterian faith and to working to combat popery and spread that faith abroad'.³⁰ However, when they believed monarchy stopped defending the Presbyterian faith and became tyrannous, this justified resistance. Justification for resistance arose from a blurring of the definition of what a covenant was, and how the people maintained the covenant. In order to establish this, the Covenanters shifted their idea of covenant to a conditional interpretation and considered the covenant more as a contract.

²⁹ *WCF*, p. 40.

³⁰ Craig Gallagher, 'Faith, Family, and Finance: Scotland's Exiled Covenanters and their networks in the Atlantic World', a paper presented to the MCEAS Brown Bag Talk, October 2014, <<https://www.academia.edu/>> [accessed 29 August 2015], p. 4.

George Buchanan introduced this conditional idea in the early sixteenth century in his *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*. He asserted tyrants were those who considered themselves higher than the law itself, which necessitated resistance. Buchanan argued the law was initially established in nature, thus by God. Buchanan, utilising Romans 13, maintained subjects were only required to be obedient to so-called ‘true’ kings, and not to tyrants.³¹ Likewise, Rutherford confidently iterated his argument, making the distinction between the person as king and the office of the king and declared:

It is evident from Rom. xiii. that all subjection and obedience to higher powers commanded there, is subjection to the power and office of the magistrate *in abstracto*, or, which is all one, to the person using the power lawfully, and that no subjection is due be that text, or any word of God, to the abused and tyrannical power of the king, which I evince from the text, and from other Scriptures.³²

The National Covenant of 1638 called for the submission and promotion of the monarchy and called for the defence of the king, which declared:

We protest and promise with our hearts under the same oath, hand-writ, and pains, that we shall defend his person and authority with our goods, bodies, and lives, in the defence of Christ His evangel, liberties of our country, ministration of justice, and punishment of iniquity, against all enemies within this realm or without.³³

Richard Cameron took this same interpretation of the king as a tyrant and made a shift in the Covenanter tradition and declared against the person of Charles II. This was evident in the language of the *Sanquhar Declaration*, which declared:

Therefore, although we be for Government & Governours, such as the word of God, & our Covenants allows; yet, we for ourselves & all that will adhere to us, *the Representatives of the true Presbyterian Church & Covenanted Nation of Scotland*, considering the great hazard of lying under Sin any longer, Do, by thir [*these*]

³¹ *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*, pp. 49-52.

³² *Lex, Rex*, p. 257.

³³ *The Westminster Confession of Faith* (Glasgow: Free Presbyterian Publications, 1990), pp. 347-354.

presents, Disown *Charles Stewart* who hath been reigning these years bygone (or rather we may say Tyrannizing) on the throne of *Britain*, as having any right, title, or interest to or in the said Crown of *Scotland* or Government; as forfaulted several years since, **by his perjury & breach of Covenant** with God & His Church, & usurpation of His Crown & Royal Prerogatives, & many other breaches in matters Ecclesiastick, & by his tyranny & breaches of the very *Leges Regnandi* in matters Civil. For which reasons, we Declare that several years since he should have been denuded of being King, Ruler, or Magistrate, or having any power, or to be obeyed as such. As also, we under the banner of our Lord Jesus Christ, the **Captain of Salvation**, do *Declare a war* with such a Tyrant, & usurper, & all the men of these practices, as Enemies to our Lord Jesus Christ & his Cause & Covenant, *And against all such as have any way strengthened him, sided with, or acknowledged him, in his usurpation & Tyranny Civil & Ecclesiastick, yea & against all such as shall any way strengthen, side with, or acknowledge him, or any other, in the like usurpation & tyranny; far more against such, as would betray or deliver up our free Reformed Church into the bondage of Antichrist, the Pope of Rome.*³⁴

By directly going against the assertion to defend the king, the *Sanquhar Declaration* and the actions of the Cameronians were in direct contradiction to the National Covenant. Out of this grassroots movement, an insurgency emerged within the Presbyterian cause in seventeenth-century Scotland and the desire to overthrow episcopacy throughout the three kingdoms. In other aspects, many yearned to establish a formalised state-like religion based on the teachings of Calvin and Knox. As a system of doctrine, Calvinism laid out several civil and ecclesiastical points concerning the church's governance as seen through Calvin's *Institutes* and considering the Bible and prior church history. Yet, unlike Knox, Buchanan, and Rutherford, Calvin did not call for revolt, nor did he call for armed resistance.

³⁴ Richard Cameron, 'Sanquhar Declaration' in Robert Wodrow, *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution*, Book III (Glasgow: Blackie, Fullerton, & Co., 1828), pp. 212-213. [emphasis mine]

However, Scottish covenanting thought stressed violence as a legitimate means to resist tyranny.

In its earliest beginnings, covenanting thought established ‘in Knox’s view of a covenanted nation’, that ‘a basic opposition to any government which would give absolute power to a ruler, whether an individual or parliament or a congress,’ and that ‘whether the rulers or people recognize it or not, they are in a covenant relationship with God’.³⁵ Although some disagreed with the Covenanters, they could agree with their cause against tyranny as Maurice Lee has pointed out regarding Knox’s *History*, ‘for those Scots who did not sympathise with Knox’s religious goals, the appeal was a patriotic one: the Congregation sought “the liberty of this our native country to remain free from the bondage of tyranny of strangers”’.³⁶ This idea of becoming ‘free from the bondage of tyranny of strangers’ was paramount for the Covenanters. However, this required a redefining of tyranny and further fortifying the conditional aspect of covenant. Samuel Rutherford introduced a new understanding of tyranny in *Lex, Rex*, establishing that it is within the conscience of the people ‘to give warning, and materially sentence against the king as a tyrant, and so by nature are to defend themselves’.³⁷

Divisive

The Covenanters reliance upon their distinctiveness promoted a propensity to dissension and division. This seems contrary to the notion of covenant. However,

³⁵ Reid, ‘John Knox’s Theology of Political Government’, p. 539.

³⁶ Maurice Lee, Jr. ‘John Knox and His “History”’ in *The Scottish Historical Review* 45, no 139, part 1: William Croft Dickinson Memorial (April 1966), p. 81.

³⁷ *Lex, Rex*, p. 210.

Covenanters opposed those who did not explicitly hold to particular interpretations of Scripture and doctrine, which promoted constant disagreements. Therefore, they continually separated into smaller factions. Joseph Moore eloquently described this aspect within the Covenanter movement and wrote:

The fissuring process of fringe Presbyterianism reinforced the vigor of the institution. The more pure the community sought to be, the more likely it was to confront and expel the “sinners” within. The more religious groups separated from those less pure than themselves, the more they were assured of their own commitment to the pure, covenanted relationship with God. No one would have said it this way, but the historical reality was that the less united the movement was, the more energy it had.³⁸

However, most points of their dissension revolved around matters non-essential to doctrine. Like Calvinism, Presbyterianism is not a doctrine; rather, it is a form or system of ecclesiastical polity. The Presbyterian form of government was and is based on a plurality of leaders and representative assemblies of elders who guide and lead the church. However, Presbyterianism throughout history has branched off and divided into various denominations and sects.³⁹

It is important to make the distinction between the broader labels and branches concerning denominational history within Scottish Presbyterianism. Each label or branch is important and requires accuracy as all Scottish Covenanters were Presbyterian, but not all Presbyterians were Covenanters. In fact, when the Presbyterian Kirk was re-established in 1690, some considered the Kirk as uncovenanted, which promoted further divisions.⁴⁰ The most ardent of Covenanters

³⁸ Joseph Moore, ‘Irish Radicals, Southern Conservatives: Slavery, Religious Liberty, and the Presbyterian Fringe in the Atlantic World, 1637-1877’ (PhD Dissertation, University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2011), p. 178.

³⁹ In some cases, historians have used Presbyterian interchangeably with Covenanter.

⁴⁰ William W. McMillan, ‘The Covenanters after the Revolution of 1688’ in *Records of the Scottish Church History Society* 10, (1950), pp. 141-153 and Mark Linden Mirabello, ‘Dissent of the Church of Scotland, 1660-1690’, (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 1988), pp. 292-305.

rejected the Act of Union of 1707 on the basis that it did not align with the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643.⁴¹ As briefly defined above, ‘Covenanter’ was the moniker given to those who signed the National Covenant in 1638, but some went by various other names and labels throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century. From an Old Testament perspective, the covenant was the basis of Israelite theology and identity. Likewise, covenant was the groundwork of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Covenanters. From a New Testament framework, many defined the church as God’s chosen people much like the Israelites of the Old Testament. Because of this, the Reformation and later Covenanter movements established this as part of their identity and initially some referred to them as ‘Society People’ or the ‘Remnant’. Some later labels bore the name of a document or author of that document such as ‘Cameronians’ who followed the ideology of Richard Cameron as well as others.⁴² Often, those who opposed the Covenanters gave less-flattering names such as the ‘anti-government party’, ‘mountain men’, or the ‘old dissenters’. Regardless, by 1743, the Covenanters formed into official societies and a presbytery with the formal name – Reformed Presbyterians.⁴³

The Seceders were another branch of the Covenanter tree that emerged around 1733 in response to the General Assembly’s ruling concerning patronage in 1732. The new law of patronage ‘provided, that if a patron did not exercise his right of presenting an

⁴¹ Colin Kidd, *Union and Unionisms: Political Thought in Scotland, 1500-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 75-80.

⁴² Douglas W. B. Somerset, ‘Notes on Some Scottish Covenanters and Ultra-Covenanters of the Eighteenth Century, Part I’ in *Scottish Reformation Society Historical Journal* 6 (2016), pp. 87-130.

⁴³ Colin Kidd, ‘Conditional Britons: The Scots Covenanting Tradition and the Eighteenth Century British State’ in *The English Historical Review* 117, no. 474 (November 2002), 1156-1157; Ian Michael Smart, ‘The Political Ideas of the Scottish Covenanters, 1638-1688’ in *History of Political Thought* 1, no. 2, (Summer 1980), p. 188; Moore, ‘Irish Radicals’, p. 175-180; and John McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, (Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Son, 1839), pp. 8-11.

individual to a parish, within six months after it became vacant, the presbytery should (*jure devoluto*) take measures for inducting a minister into the parish'.⁴⁴ The majority of the presbyteries rejected this new overture, but this was passed without amendment. In response in his sermon, 'The Stone Rejected by the Builders, Exalted as the headstone of the Corner', Ebenezer Erskine preached that:

This act, I judge is inconsistent with the principles and the practices of the best reformed churches, asserted in their public confessions of faith, and particularly with the known principles of this church, since the reformation, asserted in our books of discipline, which we are bound by solemn covenant to maintain. I am firmly persuaded, that if a timely remedy be not provided, this act will very soon terminate in the overthrow of the church of Scotland.⁴⁵

His sermon proved prophetic as he, along with three other ministers after being rebuked by the Assembly, left to form the first secession church known as the Associate Presbytery.⁴⁶ On 28 December 1743, the Seceders met in Stirling and established a *Renewal of the Covenants*.⁴⁷ Within ten years from leaving the Kirk, the Associate Presbytery consisted of 20 congregations. However, in 3 short years, this number increased to 45, prompting them 'to reconstitute themselves into a synod, to be styled "The Associate Synod," and to consist of three presbyteries; these were the Presbyteries of Dunfermline, Glasgow, and Edinburgh'.⁴⁸ A small group left Scotland for Ulster and on to America, where they formed the Associate Presbytery of

⁴⁴ McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, p. 49.

⁴⁵ Ebenezer Erskine, 'The Stone Rejected by the Builders, Exalted as the headstone of the Corner' in *The Whole Works of the Rev. Ebenezer Erskine, Minister of the Gospel at Stirling. Consisting of Sermons and Discourses, on important and Interesting Subjects*, vol. 1, (Philadelphia: Wm. S. & A. Young, 1836), p. 616.

⁴⁶ McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, p. 57-143.

⁴⁷ McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, pp. 243-255.

⁴⁸ McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, pp. 229 & 254.

Pennsylvania.⁴⁹ Although the Associate Synod continued to grow, this was hampered in 1745 by the new Burgess Oath controversy.

The Seceder branch split on the consideration of the ‘religious clause’ in the burgess oaths of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Perth. The struggle revolved around the meaning of the clause, ‘the true religion presently professed within this realm’. Some of the Seceders, known as Antiburghers felt this clause meant that they approved of the Church of Scotland and refused to take the oath. Conversely, the other Seceders, known as Burghers ‘maintained this clause of the oath bound the individual, who swore it, to approve of *the true religion itself, as that which was settled and professed* in the realm, but did not bind him to approve of *the manner* in which it might be settled and professed’.⁵⁰ Later in 1752, the Church of Scotland prompted a second secession with the deposition of Rev Thomas Gillespie due to his opposition to the presentation of Andrew Richardson to the church and parish of Inverkeithing. Gillespie’s parishioners strongly opposed Richardson’s appointment. He felt obliged to support his congregation. He later formed, along with Thomas Collier, the Presbytery of Relief.⁵¹ During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the Secession branches splintered as the Burghers further divided in 1798 between the Auld Licht and New Licht. The Auld Licht held firmly to the Solemn League and Covenant, while the New Licht rejected the obligation of the National Covenants.

⁴⁹ Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, *The Centennial History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1803-1903*, (Charleston, SC: Walker, Evans & Cogswell Co., 1905), p. 2. [Afterwards referred to as *Centennial History of the ARP*]

⁵⁰ *Centennial History of the ARP*, p. 273-274.

⁵¹ *Centennial History of the ARP*, pp. 319-321 and Kidd, *Union and Unionisms*, pp. 226-227.

Likewise, in 1806, the Antiburghers separated between the Auld and New Lights.⁵² The Reformed Presbyterians and Associate Synod later united in 1782 to form the Associate Reformed Church. Although Scots Presbyterians have divided over various other things, one aspect that remained consistent for the Covenanters was their proclivity for knowledge and learning.⁵³

Informed

The high calling of knowledge and learning were vital within covenanting thought. Some regarded the Covenanters as ‘uninformed, backwater religionists with little education’.⁵⁴ However, for the Covenanters in Scotland, education was paramount for one to have a proper sense of their calling or vocation in order to contribute to the industry of society. John Knox established the order of schools within the covenanting tradition for the purposes of reading the Bible and memorising catechism.⁵⁵ As a result, a considerable number throughout Scotland by the mid-eighteenth century were able to read but not necessarily write.⁵⁶

⁵² Richard M. Smith, “‘Auld Licht, New Licht’ and Original Secessionists in Scotland and Ireland’ in *Journal of the Scottish Church History Society* (2006), pp. 97-124 and Kidd, *Union and Unionisms*, p. 227.

⁵³ There were a considerable number of other disagreements and factions that occurred within the Covenanters’ history, but for the purposes of this thesis, I could not cover all of them. For example, one such disagreement was the Protestor—Resolutioner Controversy. For more information regarding the Protester-Resolutioner Controversy and others, please see Alasdair Raffe, *The Culture of Controversy: Religious Arguments in Scotland, 1660-1714* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012); Kyle David Holfelder, ‘Factionalism in the Kirk during the Cromwellian Invasion and Occupation of Scotland, 1650-1660: the Protester-Resolutioner Controversy’ (PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1999) and Ian Cowan, *The Scottish Covenanters, 1660-1688* (London: Victor Gollancz LTD, 1976), p. 145.

⁵⁴ Moore, ‘Irish Radicals’, p. 176.

⁵⁵ Knox believed so strongly in the purpose of education that he edited his original *Book of Order* to add the fourth ‘kind of minister left to the Church of Christ’ which ‘these ministers are called teachers and doctors’. John Knox, ‘The Form of Prayers and Ministration of the Sacraments’ (Geneva, 1556) in *The Works of John Knox*, vol. IV, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1855), p. 177.

⁵⁶ T.C. Smout, ‘Born Again at Cambuslang: New Evidence on Popular Religion and Literacy in Eighteenth-Century Scotland’ in *Past & Present* 97, (November 1982), pp. 123-124 and Rab Houston, ‘The Literacy Myth?: Illiteracy in Scotland 1630-1760’ in *Past & Present* 96 (August 1982), p. 82 & 90.

The Calvinist interpretation of the ‘priesthood of the believer’ keenly demonstrated the call for knowing Scripture. Each believer had the right given from God to read and interpret the Holy Bible individually, and the role of the pastor or elder must be one of God’s elect and necessitated education.⁵⁷ This required ministers to be knowledgeable of the Scriptures in the original languages of Hebrew and Greek and to be fully aware concerning matters of moral philosophy. Knox held an elevated view of education; not only in matters of higher education, but in that education should be available to all people regardless of age or station in society, especially the poor.⁵⁸ Knox wrote:

Men cannot so well profit in that knowledge, except they be first instructed in the tongues and human sciences, (for now God works not commonly by miracles,) it is necessary that seed be sown for the time to come, to the intent that the Church be no left barren and waste to our posterity; and that schools also be erected, and colleges maintained, ... wherein youth may be trained in the knowledge and fear of God, that in their ripe age they may prove worthy members of our Lord Jesus Christ, whether it in to rule in Civil policy, or serve in the Spiritual ministry, or else to live in godly reverence and subjection.⁵⁹

Knox established liberal education in Scotland that progressed from catechism to college (high school) then onto university. In the *First Book of Discipline*, Knox asserted how education ought to be established and wrote:

Of necessity therefore we judge it, that every several church have a schoolmaster appointed, such a one as is able, at least, to teach Grammar and the Latin tongue, if the town be of any reputation. If it be upland, [rural] ... then must either the Reader or the Minister there appointed, take care over the children and youth of the parish, to

⁵⁷ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge, Esq. 1599. Christian Classics Ethereal Library. < <http://www.ccel.org/c/calvin/institutes/institutes.html> > [Accessed 22 August 2015], Book IV, Chap. 3, 12.

⁵⁸ John Knox, ‘The First Book of Discipline’ in the *History of the Reformation of Scotland*, vol. 2, ed. William Croft Dickenson, (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1949), pp. 295-302. [Afterwards referred to as *The First Book of Discipline*]

⁵⁹ Knox, ‘The Form of Prayers and Ministration of the Sacraments’, p. 177. [translated to modern English]

instruct them in their first rudiments, and especially in the Catechism,... And further, we think it expedient that in every notable town ... [there] be erected a College [High School], in which the Arts, at least Logic and Rhetoric, together with the Tongues, be read by sufficient Masters, for whom honest stipends must be appointed: as also provision for those that be poor, and be not able by themselves, no by their friends, to be sustained at letters, especially such as come from landward. ... Last, the great schools called Universities shall be replenished with those apt for learning.⁶⁰

The first and primary means of education was the catechism. This was for all children and to be completed in the home and church. Catechising was an ancient form of education that required the answering of questions on matters pertaining to the Bible and doctrine. At the time of Knox and the Reformation, the catechism of choice was that of John Calvin, of which Knox included as an appendix to his first publication of his *Book of Discipline*.⁶¹ In the mid-seventeenth century, Samuel Rutherford penned his own catechism and contributed to the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (1647), which became the primary catechism for Presbyterians throughout Scotland and later America.⁶² Catechising was vital to Rutherford as evidenced in a letter he wrote to John Gordon of Cardoness while in exile in Aberdeen, ‘Receive no doctrine contrary to that which I delivered to you. If ye fall away, and forget it, and that Catechism which I taught you, and so forsake your own mercy, the Lord be Judge betwixt you and me. I take heaven and earth to witness, that such shall eternally perish’.⁶³ This

⁶⁰ *First Book of Discipline*, pp. 295-296.

⁶¹ Knox was adamant that parishioners completed catechism every Sunday afternoon, except on the Sundays of communion, see Knox, *First Book of Discipline*, p. 312.

⁶² The *Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechisms: Revised and adopted became the established catechisms for the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America on 29 May 1788* in *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod, 1706-1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1904), p 547.

⁶³ Samuel Rutherford, *The Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, edited by Andrew A. Bonar (1891 reprinted Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1984, 2006), Letter 166, p. 286. [Afterwards referred to as *Letters*]

fervent passion for catechism spurred other Scottish Covenanters to demand their children's training in this manner.

The second means through which one received education according to Knox was through college or high school. In the *Book of Discipline*, Knox demanded:

And further, we think it expedient that in every notable town ... [there] be erected a College [High School], in which the Arts, at least Logic and Rhetoric, together with the Tongues, be read by sufficient Masters, for whom honest stipends must be appointed: as also provision for those that be poor, and be not able by themselves, no by their friends, to be sustained at letters, especially such as come from landward.⁶⁴

The third and final means one ought to be educated was through the university. Knox declared in his *Book of Discipline* that 'the great Schools, called Universities, shall be replenished with those that are apt to learning; for this must be carefully provided, ... but all must be compelled to bring up their children in learning and virtue'.⁶⁵ As Knox called for the purpose of education, specifically catechism to gain a specific understanding of the Bible and doctrine, for the Scottish Presbyterians, there was no more important doctrine than that of covenant.

Covenant

Calvinism and Presbyterianism require recognition as systems of theology and not specifically as doctrine. Although theology and doctrine are inter-related, they are quite different. Theology or systems of theology broadly defined are the study of God or the method one uses to study God. Yet, doctrine is simply that which is believed or taught. Based on these broad descriptions, the notion of covenant was taught and

⁶⁴ *First Book of Discipline*, pp. 296.

⁶⁵ *First Book of Discipline*, pp. 296.

believed as doctrine. The biblical doctrine of covenant for those within the Reformed tradition was foundational. This section does not seek to give a full theological exegesis of the Biblical covenants but will briefly set out the importance of covenant. Initially for Covenant Theology, two primary theological covenants existed, the covenants of work and grace. Both were widely accepted by the Westminster Assembly and standard. The covenant of works (life) established the relationship between God and Adam who represented all of humanity as the federal head. Within this covenant, obedience promised life eternal and death for disobedience. When Adam sinned in the garden, he, along with all of humanity, broke this covenant, and as a result, required additional covenants. As for the covenant of grace, this was evident in the covenants between God and Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and later in the New Covenant through Jesus.⁶⁶ From a broad theological perspective, dynamic shifts occurred within covenant understanding.

A key aspect of understanding these interpretations of covenant, was how later covenanting thought established further covenants that were extra-biblical and introduced dynamic shifts in the interpretation of exactly what covenant meant. God established covenant first with Adam (one man) on behalf of all of humankind, and later with Abraham (one man) on behalf of one nation. The Covenanters determined that one's individual salvation or conversion put them into covenant with God through Jesus, and as a result demanded a life in covenant with others in the church and later in the state. W. Stanford Reid wrote that 'Knox took Calvin's idea of the covenant between God and the individual and carried it over into the political field

⁶⁶ Robert Letham, *The Westminster Assembly: Reading Its Theology in Historical Context. The Westminster Assembly and the Reformed Faith* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2009), pp. 227-234.

with the view that there was a covenant also between God and a faithful, believing people'.⁶⁷

The Scottish understanding of Covenant theology that formed almost two hundred years prior to the American Revolution prompted a 'banding' or 'bonding' component as S.A. Burrell explained:

While the leaders of the Scottish kirk did their best to preserve the theological orthodoxy of the covenant idea in the traditional Calvinist way, they also transformed it, not theoretically but practically, in the forty-year period between 1596 and 1637. By the end of that time it had become in popular language not an elaboration of God's compact with the elect but the justification for a special divine bond between God and the people of Scotland. Thus by a shift in emphasis the covenant of grace was transmuted into a new covenant of Abraham under which the kingdom of Scotland supplanted ancient Israel as God's covenanted nation.⁶⁸

Through this shift, the attentions of the people of Scotland were transformed, and the sense of constancy towards fellow Presbyterians grew.

For the Covenanters, there was a consistency in understanding the importance of the covenant, whether viewed as a strict covenant or as a contract.⁶⁹ However, this was in concert with the philosophical dilemma facing Scotland at a time of the rising socio-political philosophy of the 'social contract'. 'It provided a conceptual framework', as James Torrance pointed out that, 'within which Reformed theology was to be recast (federal theology), but also provided a language of communication (virtually a

⁶⁷ Reid, 'John Knox's Theology of Political Government', p. 531.

⁶⁸ S.A. Burrell, 'The Covenant Idea as a Revolutionary Symbol: Scotland, 1596-1637' in *Church History: Studies in Christianity and Culture* 27, no. 4 (December 1958), pp. 342-43.

⁶⁹ For a further examination of Covenant Theology, please see Michael S. Horton, *God of Promise: An Introduction to Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2006) or Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview* (Eugene, OR: Wipph and Stock Publishers, 2006).

“theology of politics”) which could be readily grasped by the man in the street, in a land struggling for freedom’.⁷⁰ Torrance goes on to further describe that the notion of covenant was unconditional, but the idea of contract was legal and conditional, thus making a dramatic shift away from a doctrine of unconditional grace, but to an ideology of covenant that could somehow be broken. By shifting the covenant to a more conditional understanding, Samuel Rutherford in his work, *Lex, Rex*, began to blur the distinction between covenant and contract. For example, question fourteen of *Lex, Rex* concerning whether or not the people make a person their king conditionally or absolutely, Rutherford asserted that the covenant was conditional and should either party neglect their duty, the covenant and/or contract could be nullified.⁷¹ So, how does the notion of resistance and republic work within the confines of covenant? This was a question that the Scottish Covenanters struggled to answer.

Aggressive

Historians have described the Scottish Covenanters character as militant and aggressive.⁷² Some have even tried recently to somehow align the seventeenth-century Covenanters with the twenty-first-century Taliban.⁷³ This may be an extreme understanding of the Covenanters. However, there is no doubt that they were confrontational and militant in their interpretations concerning what was considered

⁷⁰ James F. Torrance, ‘Covenant or Contract?: A Study of the Theological Background of Worship in Seventeenth-Century Scotland’ in *Scottish Journal of Theology*, 23, no. 1 (February, 1970), p. 53.

⁷¹ *Lex, Rex*, Q: XIV, pp. 99-112.

⁷² Mark Jardine, ‘The United Societies: Militancy, Martyrdom and the Presbyterian Movement in Late-Restoration Scotland, 1679-1688’ (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2009)

⁷³ Frank Cogliano, [FrankCogliano], (6 July 2015), ‘Almost Taliban-like rule of the Kirk in seventeenth-century Scotland...’ #JeffersonGLI2015 [Tweet], Retrieved from <https://twitter.com/FrankCogliano/status/618003945735233536> - In this particular case, Cogliano was quoting Tom Devine in his introduction to the Scottish Enlightenment in the 2015 Jefferson Gilder Lehrman Seminar.

right or wrong in matters personal, public, civil, and ecclesiological.⁷⁴ David Fischer in his important work, *Albion's Seed* described the migrants from Scotland and Ireland as having a 'militant Christianity'.⁷⁵ The example provided by Fischer was none other than Richard Cameron and his 'Society People' or 'Cameronians' who 'engaged in a practice called "rabbling," or forcibly removing "unregenerate" clergy from their livings, sometimes with *much violence*'.⁷⁶ Because of this militant characteristic, later Covenanters valorised and provided martyrologies, elaborate histories, and stories of heroic resistance, especially those who came out of the persecution and execution of The Killing Time of the 1680s.⁷⁷

Loyal

The final feature was one of devotion and allegiance. In some respects, this mention of loyalty as it pertained to the Covenanters may seem like the descriptor above concerning 'covenant'. However, this promotes a different side of the same coin as Covenanters were staunchly loyal to their families and communities. Fischer noted that the Scottish border clans were formidable because they were 'a group of related families who lived near to one another, were conscious of a common identity, carried

⁷⁴ Kidd, 'Conditional Britons', pp. 1147-1148.

⁷⁵ David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 615-618.

⁷⁶ Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, p. 616. Italics mine.

⁷⁷ Robert Wodrow, *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution*, 4 vols. (Glasgow: Blackie, Fullerton, & Co., 1828-30) – The original edition was published in two volumes in 1721-2722; For a concise summary, see A. M. Starkey, 'Robert Wodrow and the History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland' in *Church History* 43, no. 4 (December 1974), pp. 488-498; John Henderson Thomson, *A Cloud of Witnesses for the Royal Prerogatives of Jesus Christ: Being the Last Speeches and Testimonies of Those who Have Suffered for the Truth in Scotland Since the Year 1680*, (n.p., 1714); and John Howie, *Biographia Scoticana: or, A Brief Historical Account of the Lives, Characters, and Memrable Transactions of the most eminent Scots Worthies, Noblemen, Gentlemen, Ministers, and others: From Mr. Patrick Hamilton, who was born about the year of our Lord 1503, and suffered martyrdom at St. Andrews, Feb. 1527, to Mr. James Renwick, who was executed in the Grass-market of Edinburgh Feb. 17, 1688*, 2nd ed. (Glasgow: John Bryce, 1781).

the same surname, claimed descent from common ancestors, and banded together when danger threatened'.⁷⁸ The community banded together as, Ian Smart has pointed out, served as the conduit for resistance as 'rulers and constitutions thus set up by the community could be changed, retrained, or rejected by the community if they became destructive of their original purpose'.⁷⁹ But, what of allegiance? Is allegiance owed or earned? Nicole Greenspan answers this question writing that, 'for Scottish Covenanters, the king had to earn their loyalty and obedience. Charles II, however, maintained that by virtue of his office his subjects owed him allegiance'.⁸⁰ This is keenly evident for the Covenanters, the one true king was God, and it was their banner 'For Christ's Crown and Covenant' that they established their allegiance as Greenspan has argued:

The experience of the civil war profoundly shaped notions of allegiance... The trial and execution of Charles I and the succession of his son afforded the opportunity to redefine the terms of loyalty and its parameters. Contemporaries recognized multiple allegiances, including to God, church, monarch, parliament, country, and nation, which could come in conflict with one another and require reordering or prioritizing.⁸¹

This 'conflict with one another' was evident with the Covenanters in Scotland and evidenced with the various divisions within the church. However, with the ever-changing interpretation of the conditional covenant, the allegiance to the king was irrelevant, as their primary loyalty remained within covenant with their one true king – God, and to their one true kingdom – the church.

⁷⁸ David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 663.

⁷⁹ Ian Michael Smart, 'The Political Ideas of the Scottish Covenanters, 1638-1688' in *History of Political Thought* 1, no. 2, (Summer 1980), p. 193.

⁸⁰ Nicole Greenspan, 'Charles II, Exile, and the Problem of Allegiance' in *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 1 (March 2011), p. 96.

⁸¹ Greenspan, 'Charles II, Exile, and the Problem of Allegiance', p. 74.

This perspective of the Covenanters is a small list of the several traits ascribed to the Scottish Covenanters and later covenanting thought. Together it provides a small glimpse of the ideas that formed their radical political ideology. Each attribute singularly was insufficient to justify resistance, but together they provided a better argument or purpose for resistance.

Chapter 2 – Interpretation

Resistance Justified Theologically

Stanley Hauerwas once wrote that ‘when war is undertaken in the name of God, there can be no limit to killing because so much is allegedly at stake’.¹ Hauerwas’s statement proves true when one looks to the Covenanters call for violent rebellion in both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. What were the theological and historical justifications for violence? How did pastors and theologians during the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries justify the use of violence? Where did the justification for violent resistance begin? Before answering these questions, one must understand the definition of violence within Scotland during this period. Broadly, this was the permission or justification to use physical force for the purposes of defending one’s individual and communal liberties and rights. Within the context of covenanting thought, this was not the justification for rampant bloodshed or killing. Justified violence was solely for the purpose of defence, not for the sake of offence, such as the raiding of villages or towns. This chapter seeks to provide insight and set the cornerstone into these ideas and examines the interpretation of how ministers justified violence theologically as a means of achieving ‘salvation’.

Violence as a means of ‘salvation’

Within Reformed Theology and teaching, the idea or notion of violence as a requirement of salvation was not a new interpretation and relied heavily on the Jewish

¹ Stanley Hauerwas, *War and the American Difference: Theological Reflections on Violence and National Identity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011), p. 8.

tradition. For example, in his book, *The Desire of the Nations*, Oliver O'Donovan noted that the Hebrews of the Old Testament achieved 'salvation' through military victory and the continued favour of God for those who live within his covenant.² For the followers of covenant theology, salvation was purely for the elect.³ Regarding salvation, the term 'elect' pertained primarily as the individual(s) chosen by God. In addition to this idea of election was the Puritan notion of the 'mortification of sin' as a means of sanctification. Through these interpretations, covenanting thought expanded and reached beyond an eternal salvation, towards a temporal understanding of salvation.

Much of the historiography pertaining to the Scottish Covenanters referred to their politics as a 'Presbyterian cause'. Yet, historians rarely ever defined this cause.⁴ What exactly was the 'Presbyterian Cause'? The primary aspect of this cause was the promotion and promulgation of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the salvation of those who heard it. This promotion of the gospel took on new forms throughout Scotland and later promoted in the North American Colonies as seen in conventicles and holy

² Oliver O'Donovan, *The Desire of the Nations: Rediscovering the roots of political theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 36-37.

³ *The confession of faith and the larger and shorter catechisme first agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and now appointed by the Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland to be a part of uniformity in religion, between the Kirks of Christ in the three kingdoms*, ([Edinburgh]: Amsterdam, printed by Luice Elsever [i.e. Gideon Lithgow], for Andrew Wilson, and are to be sold at his shop in Edinburgh, 1649), pp. 7-8. Accessed *Early English Books Online* on 15 November 2015, [Afterwards WCF, 1646]

⁴ Richard Gardiner, 'The Presbyterian Rebellion?' in *The Journal of the American Revolution* (5 Sept 2013) accessed on 9 November 2015. In it, he cited a number of others who tried to explain better the American Revolution as a Presbyterian conflict. These were through William H. Nelson, *The American Tory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961, p. 51; Sir George Otto Trevelyan, *The American Revolution*, Vol. III (New York: Longmans, Green, & Company, 1915) pp. 311-312.; John C. Miller, *Origins of the American Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1943), p. 186. A.S. Hammond, August 5, 1776, *Hammond Papers*, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA. Yet, none of these authors or sources ever specifically used the phrase a 'Presbyterian war'.

fairs.⁵ However, this Presbyterian cause had a more sinister understanding with the spread of the gospel through physical violence.

Samuel Rutherford in his work, *A Free Disputation Against Pretended Liberty of Conscience* wrote that if the hearers of the gospel first refused to listen, violence ought not to be the first resort of ministers or the believers. He wrote, 'It is not lawfull to us to goe with fire and sword, to force the *Indians, Samaritans*, or any heathen to embrace the Christian faith'.⁶ However, he went on to state that if the so-called heathen or savages, conducted 'nationall injuries, and acts of hostility, we may raise armes against them, and in these warres in case of subduing, we may intend the propagating of the Gospel to them'.⁷ Conversely, he later asserted that 'Religion is not to be compelled by force, for we are not infallible, and those whom we force as hereticks may be no hereticks, for ought we know, but as sound in the faith as our selves'.⁸ Initially, this appears contradictory, but Rutherford resolved the contradiction through a fuzzy distinction of the roles for church and the state. The church cannot promote the gospel through violent means, but if the church fell under attack, then it can defend itself. Similarly, the church can utilise the means of the magistrate for the promotion of unity in doctrine, and in some cases permitted brute force if necessary.⁹ Yet, it was out of this obscure understanding that violence began the justification for resistance.

⁵ Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scotland and the making of American Revivalism*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001).

⁶ Samuel Rutherford, *A Free Disputation Against pretended Liberty of Conscience Tending To Resolve Doubts moved by Mr. John Goodwin, John Baptist, Dr. Jer. Taylor, the Belgick Arminians, Socinians, and other authors contending for lawlesse Liberty, or licentious Toleration of sects and heresies*. London, 1649. *Early English Books Online*. pp. 249-250. [Afterwards referred to as *A Free Disputation*]

⁷ *A Free Disputation*, p. 250.

⁸ *A Free Disputation*, p. 254.

⁹ *A Free Disputation*, pp. 298-304.

Ministers made the comparison of Covenanters as ‘God’s chosen people’ and the Israelites of the Old Testament and was used by theologians and ministers in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Scotland. For example, Rutherford was keen to make the comparison between Scotland and Zion.¹⁰ In one facet of this comparison, Rutherford considered himself a ‘Joshua’ for the people of Scotland as one to spy out the land.¹¹ He wrote to Hugh MacKail, ‘But He would send me as a spy into this wilderness of suffering, to see the land and try the ford; and I cannot make a lie of Christ’s cross. I can report nothing but good both of Him and it, lest others should faint’.¹² Rutherford further correlated Scotland as Zion and its covenant with God when writing to the son of a laird and minister Matthew Mowat. Rutherford wrote that ‘I know that Zion and her Husband cannot both sleep at once; I believe that our Lord once again will water with His dew the withered hill of Mount Zion in Scotland... Remember our Covenant’.¹³ In many cases throughout his letters when Rutherford used the term ‘Zion’, he was referring to the Kirk. Nevertheless, Rutherford’s perspective on ‘Zion’ also pertained to Scotland as a nation. He did not separate the two. As Kingsley Rendell wrote, ‘To Rutherford, Kirk and country were synonymous’.¹⁴ Through his federalist theology, he recognised the Kirk of Scotland and Scotland as a nation as the same in the sight of God.¹⁵ Rutherford exemplified this synonymy in a letter written to John Row. Rutherford wrote:

¹⁰ Samuel Rutherford, *The Letters of Samuel Rutherford*, edited by Andrew A. Bonar (1891 reprinted Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1984, 2006), [Afterwards referred to as *Letters*] Rutherford uses the word ‘Zion’ in 110 of his letters, whereas he uses ‘covenant’ in 92 of his letters. Of these letters, 38 letters with use both ‘Zion’ and ‘covenant’ in the same letter.

¹¹ Numbers 14

¹² *Letters*, p. 211.

¹³ *Letters*, pp. 448-449.

¹⁴ Kingsley G. Rendell, *Samuel Rutherford: A New Biography of the Man and His Ministry* (Ross-shire: Christian Focus Publications, 2003), p. 139.

¹⁵ This was not uncommon, please refer to Welwood’s letters in David George Mullan, *Protestant Piety In Early-Modern Scotland: Letters, Lives and Covenants, 1650-1712* (Edinburgh: Scottish History Society, 2008).

He suffereth men to break their spears and swords upon Him, and the enemies to plough Zion, and make long and deep their furrows on her back. But it would not be so, if the Lord had not a sowing for His ploughing. What can He do, but melt an old drossy kirk, that He may bring out a new bride out of the fire again? I think that Christ is just now repairing His house, and exchanging His old vessels with new vessels, and is going through this land, and taking up an inventory and a roll of so many of Levi's sons, and good professors, that He may make them new work for the Second Temple; and whatsoever shall be found not to be for the work, shall be casten over the wall.¹⁶

Although this may seem confusing, it was common for a minister of the Kirk to see Scotland as the restoration or succession of the nation of Israel. Pertaining to the 'Scottish Revolution', Stevenson noted there were, 'further developments in covenant ideas which led to Scotland being seen as a chosen people, successors to the Israelites'.¹⁷ This notion of 'Zion' further fostered the understanding of God's kingdom 'on earth as it is in heaven'.¹⁸

Rutherford contended that the ushering in of God's kingdom and salvation required violence. He wrote to James McAdam regarding the need for 'violence' to achieve salvation and sanctification: 'Contend for salvation. Your Master, Christ, won heaven with strokes: it is a besieged castle; it must be taken with violence'.¹⁹ In a letter to John Lennox (Laird of Cally), Rutherford pleaded for Lennox to wrestle for his sanctification writing, 'Worthy and dear Sir, separate yourself from such, and bend yourself to the utmost of your strength and breath, in running fast for salvation; and,

¹⁶ *Letters*, pp. 329-330. This lengthy passage requires brief commentary, the term 'Zion' here required interpretation as either the Kirk or Scotland. However, when considering the term 'Second Temple', this implied that Zion received recognition as Scotland and the 'Second Temple' is the Kirk. In addition, the term, 'Levi's sons' pertained to the ministers of the Kirk.

¹⁷ David Stevenson, *Revolution and Counter Revolution, 1644-51*, (Edinburgh: John Donald Publishers, Ltd, 2003), p. 45.

¹⁸ Matthew 6.10 (ESV)

¹⁹ *Letters*, p. 244.

in taking Christ's kingdom, use violence'.²⁰ Rutherford implored Jean Gordon to 'set up the brae to the King's city that must be taken by violence'.²¹ Similarly, in a letter to Alexander Gordon, after giving lengthy advice on how to live a righteous life, Rutherford wrote, 'when we grow to some further perfection, we must take heaven by violence, and take by violence from Christ what we get'.²²

However, Rutherford took the idea of the individual's wrestling and mortification of sin and elevated the idea to a grander scale of the collective's salvation with the collective being the Kirk, Scotland or the three kingdoms as a whole. Rutherford was a keen theologian, and his orthodoxy was rarely questioned; however, aspects of his letters once examined against Scripture tell a different story.²³ Rutherford clearly had a political agenda behind the content of some of his letters, as evident in his interpretation of Scotland as Zion and in the violence required for her salvation.

In seeking to examine properly the influence and legacy of resistance within Scottish covenanting thought, one must comprehend other Protestant ideas and determine the

²⁰ *Letters*, p. 362.

²¹ *Letters*, p. 248.

²² *Letters*, p. 325.

²³ Rutherford's Letters have been compared to Scripture, see John Coffey, *Politics, Religion, and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 6 as he quoted Charles H. Spurgeon, who wrote 'When we are dead and gone let the word know that Spurgeon held Rutherford's *Letters* to be the nearest thing to inspiration which can be found in all the writings of mere men'. The footnote reads, 'C.H. Spurgeon in *The Sword and The Trowel*, June 1891'. As stated above, the notion of an individual's pursuit of sanctification through violence was common, see Christopher Love, *The Zealous Christian Taking Heaven by Holy Violence* (London: 1654). Therefore, recognising Rutherford's understanding of violence as a means to salvation for the individual is easy. However, his believe that this applied to the collective was unique. Rutherford's justification came from two verses in the New Testament, Matthew 11:12 and Luke 16:16, and during Rutherford's time, interpreting these passages to justify that God's kingdom came by violent revolution was acceptable. Although both of these passages typically accepted passively because Jesus commanded to love enemies and not live by the sword, Rutherford and other Covenanters took a more aggressive approach to these verses and used their social status to promote this interpretation.

extent this notion of resistance occurred within covenant theology and evolved beyond Scotland.²⁴ In this chapter, I plan to demonstrate briefly how radical Presbyterians utilised their understanding of the magistrate's authority or abuse thereof as a justification of resistance.

'Two Kings and Two Kingdoms'

Douglas Kelly rightly declared that 'many of the religious-political struggles' in Scotland 'were based on the question of who is head of the church'.²⁵ The Covenanters 'held to a "two-powers" theory of church and state as two divinely ordained bodies, neither one deriving its power from the other, but both from God, so that neither one was subservient'.²⁶ Specifically, within the *Westminster Confession*, the state was not to have any authority within the church but was to enforce what the church demanded:

Civil magistrates... hath Authority, and it is his duty, to take order that Unity and peace be preserved in the Church, that the truth of God be kept pure and entire, that all blasphemies and heresies be suppressed, all corruptions and abuses in worship and discipline prevented, or reformed: and all the Ordinances of God duly settled, administered and observed.²⁷

This distinction is important for understanding the nuances of the Covenanters' interpretation. Crawford Gribben summarised it best when he wrote 'the "two kingdoms" theory denied that the authority of church and state should in any way overlap; but it demanded that the law of God was the ultimate definition of morality

²⁴ For the most succinct description of the political ideas of Scottish Covenanters, especially regarding resistance, see Ian Michael Smart, 'The Political Ideas of the Scottish Covenanters, 1638-1688' in *History of Political Thought* 1, no. 2, (Summer 1980), pp. 167-193.

²⁵ Douglas F. Kelly, *The Emergence of Liberty in the Modern World: The Influence of Calvin on Five Governments from the 16th through 18th Centuries*, (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1992), p. 66.

²⁶ Kelly, *The Emergence of Liberty in the Modern World*, p. 129.

²⁷ WCF, 23:3, p. 55.

for both'.²⁸ The Covenanters' political theology was based foremost on their allegiance to God and not necessarily a physical 'kingdom' or 'nation'. The Covenanters' understanding of 'kingdom' did not focus on physical or geographical space but pertained to matters that were defined as *eternal* and *temporal*. Their interpretation was that all people, including kings and rulers were subject to Jesus Christ as king. Alexander Henderson wrote 'The people and the magistrate are jointly bound in covenant with God for observing and preserving the commandments of the first and second table, as may be seen in the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles'.²⁹ Nevertheless, before fully looking specifically into the Scottish Covenanting interpretation, there must be a brief examination of Calvin's understanding in order to see how it compared.³⁰

In Calvin's *Institutes*, he did not make a deliberate declaration in favour of any one form of government, nor did he claim Jesus to be the reigning monarch above all monarchies in both the civil and ecclesiastical governments.³¹ However, like Luther,

²⁸ Crawford Gribben, 'Samuel Rutherford and Liberty of Conscience' in *Samuel Rutherford: An Introduction to his Theology*, ed. Matthew Vogan (Edinburgh: Scottish Reformation Society, 2012), p. 285.

²⁹ Alexander Henderson, 'Instructions for Defensive Arms', in Andrew Stevenson, *The history of the church and state of Scotland: from the accession of King Charles I. to the year 1649, to which is prefixed an abstract of the state of religion in Scotland from the earliest ages of Christianity to the year 1625* (Edinburgh: T. Nelson 1840), p. 358.

³⁰ For a more detailed understanding of broader positions of this doctrine, whether Roman Catholic or other Protestant interpretations, see David VanDrunen, *Natural Law and the Two Kingdoms: A Study in the Development of Reformed Social Thought* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2010), pp. 22-41; specifically for more detail regarding the Lutheran understanding, please see: William J. Wright, *Martin Luther's Understanding of God's Two Kingdoms: A Response to the Challenge of Skepticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010); Anders Nygren, 'Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms' in *The Ecumenical Review*, vol. 1, no. 3, (1949), pp. 301-310; Brent W. Sockness, 'Luther's Two Kingdoms Revisited: A Response to Reinhold Niebuhr's Criticism of Luther' in *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, vol. 20, no. 1, (Spring, 1992), pp. 93-110; David VanDrunen, 'The Two Kingdoms: A Reassessment of the Transformationist Calvin' in *Calvin Theological Journal*, vol. 40, no. 2 (November 2005), p. 254; and John Witte, Jr., 'Rights, Resistance, and Revolution in the Western Tradition: Early Protestant Foundations' in *Law and History Review*, vol. 26, no. 3, (Fall, 2008), pp. 548-555.

³¹ This section focuses on Book IV, Chapter 20 of John Calvin's, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, [1536] trans. Henry Beveridge, 1845 (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library,

Calvin made the separation between the church and the state. Calvin wrote, ‘but he who knows to distinguish between the body and the soul, between the present fleeting life and that which is future and eternal, will have no difficulty in understanding that the spiritual kingdom of Christ and civil government are things very widely separated’.³² David VanDrunen summarised it best when he wrote that ‘Calvin distinguished clearly between Christ’s redemptive role in the spiritual kingdom, experienced now in the church, and God’s providential rule in the civil kingdom, comprising the state and various areas of life outside of the church’.³³ Calvin made clear this separation when he wrote that it was ‘a Jewish vanity to seek and include the kingdom of Christ under the elements of this world’.³⁴ This was an important phrase and a foreshadowing of how the Covenanters later interpreted their role within Scotland and later America.

Calvin made further distinctions between ecclesiastical and civil governance as having significant places within the covenanting interpretation. He introduced the notion of heavenly versus earthly functions of government. He clarified that the spiritual kingdom of God was not at odds with the government of the state; rather that God had ordained civil government. Calvin also established purposes for the state, such as to protect and maintain the external worship of God, to defend sound doctrine and the condition or position of the church, to adjust the Christian’s life to human society, and to promote general peace and tranquillity.³⁵ The Covenanters exploited

2013), <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/calvin/institutes.pdf>, pp. 1213-1239. [Afterwards referred to as *Institutes*]

³² *Institutes*, p. 1168.

³³ David VanDrunen, ‘The Two Kingdoms Doctrine and the Relationship of Church and State in the Early Reformed Tradition’, in *Journal of Church and State* 49 (Autumn, 2007), pp. 743-744.

³⁴ *Institutes*, p. 1168.

³⁵ *Institutes*, p. 1169.

these points in seeking to manipulate the role that the church had in relation to civil government.

He further laid out that there are three parts of civil government, which were ‘the Magistrate, who is president and guardian of the laws; the Laws, according to which he governs; and the People, who are governed by the laws, and obey the magistrate’.³⁶

The magistrate was ordained of God as vice-regents of God’s law, and Calvin provided a number of examples throughout the Old Testament. In addition, Calvin provided justification for resistance, but within the confines of a just cause. He vindicated the exercise and use of force when necessary if it was not against piety.

With regards to representation within government, Calvin asserted that civil governments levied tributes to the state in taxes in order to sustain the need for government. The Christian ought to obey their rulers even if deemed unjust. They owed their obedience since God sustained government powers and established them in place. Conversely, Calvin noted that a wicked ruler might in fact be a judgment of God on a wicked people. It was not up to the subjects of the kingdom to seek vengeance, but rather, to be obedient and allow God to enact vengeance as He deemed fit. However, God is merciful and will bring relief from tyrannical rule if the case warrants.³⁷ Calvin provided some insight into his preferred form of government and wrote:

Monarchy is prone to tyranny. In an aristocracy, again, the tendency is not less to the faction of a few, while in popular ascendancy there is the strongest tendency to sedition. When these three forms of government, of which philosophers treat, are considered in themselves, I, for my part, am far from denying that the form which greatly surpasses the others is aristocracy, either pure or modified by popular

³⁶ *Institutes*, p. 1170.

³⁷ *Institutes*, pp. 1170-1173.

government, not indeed in itself, but because it very rarely happens that kings so rule themselves as never to dissent from what is just and right, or are possessed of so much acuteness and prudence as always to see correctly.³⁸

Calvin's thoughts concerning civil and ecclesiastical governments clearly demonstrated these as necessary but separate, which began to take shape in Scotland through the leadership and interpretation of John Knox.

A disciple of Calvin, John Knox made the first shift in the evolving interpretation concerning the role of civil and ecclesiastical governments only twenty years after Calvin's *Institutes*. Knox's lesser-known *Appellation* and his better-known *Book of Discipline* demonstrated this shift that later became known as the *First Book of Discipline* after the publication of the *Second Book of Discipline* in 1578.³⁹ Within the *Book of Discipline*, Knox laid out the requirements for the Protestant Reformation throughout Scotland and addressed matters pertaining to the establishment of the Presbyterian government of the Kirk. He championed additional matters such as education, caring for the poor, and the appointment of ministers and policy of the church. This small instruction manual for the church followed a similar understanding of the church as Calvin's *Institutes* in matters of the church and state. However, Knox made a distinction when using the civil government to assist in the punishment of those whom the church disciplined.⁴⁰ Through this small 'merger', the civil and ecclesiastical forms of government bonded together. This was a first step, as it were,

³⁸ *Institutes*, p. 1173.

³⁹ Knox wrote a number of other works, but for the sake of brevity, this section will examine, John Knox, *The appellation of John Knox from the sentence pronounced by the bishops and clergy: Addressed to the Nobility and Estates of Scotland* (Geneva, 1558) in *The Works of John Knox*, vol. IV, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1855), pp. 461-520. [Afterwards referred to as *Appellation*] and John Knox, 'The First Book of Discipline' in the *History of the Reformation of Scotland*, vol. 2, ed. William Croft Dickenson, (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1949), pp. 280-325. [Afterwards referred to as *First Book of Discipline*]

⁴⁰ *First Book of Discipline*, pp. 280-325.

to make a covenant between the church and the nation. One of the first matters in this shift was defining the notion of 'kingdom' and 'nation', and thus making them synonymous. This was a concept that propelled the Protestant Reformation in Scotland. Knox used this sense of 'nationalism' as a call for educational reforms throughout all of Scotland, and it was through these educational reforms that the Scottish Presbyterians and later Covenanters gained their influence.

In several aspects, Knox was in lock step with Calvin concerning matters of civil government. In areas of similarity as W. Stanford Reid pointed out, Knox believed that Church and state were to be separate, yet he believed that each was directly responsible to God. In matters of government, the state must not have control nor dictate matters of the church. Equally, the church must not interfere in matters pertaining to the state. Although Knox was very critical of Queen Mary and others in government, he did not claim to have civil authority over them. However, he avowed that if the decisions of the state were contrary to Scripture, then the church had the right and Biblical obligation to reject or oppose those decisions. Yet, these matters were only possible if the magistrates were Christians and lived a godly life. Richard Greaves gave a succinct introduction noting that Knox 'maintained that obedience to higher powers was due as long as those powers did not command things contrary to divine precepts. When such things were commanded, disobedience was justified'.⁴¹ He also wrote that Knox's 'concept of disobedience cannot be properly understood

⁴¹ Richard L. Greaves, 'John Knox, the Reformed Tradition, and the Development of Resistance Theory', *The Journal of Modern History* 48, no 3 (September 1976), p. 2.

without a knowledge of covenant obligations and relationships'.⁴² Otherwise, if they were not godly, then the ones who elected them removed them.⁴³

There are additional examples of where Knox slightly moved away from Calvin's conservative position and introduced matters reminiscent of a more 'radical' theocentric understanding. For example, 'Knox believed, first of all, that for both civil and ecclesiastical government to be true governments they must be obedient to God as he has revealed himself in holy scripture', and 'this meant that both state and church must obey divine law'.⁴⁴ Furthermore, Knox specifically showed his desire of a quasi-theocracy when he declared 'it is evident that the Rulers, Magistrates, and Judges, *now in Christes kingdome*, are no lesse bound to obedience unto God, than were those under the Law'.⁴⁵ Knox was clearly advocating a moral law for the kingdom to be followed by all, even those who might not consider themselves a part of Christ's kingdom because they 'dispeise his religion'.⁴⁶ Knox declared that civil magistrates ought to submit to Christ as the true king and that they must protect the subjects. This aspect clearly indicated the importance of a theocratic interpretation for Knox. Knox challenged the magistrates and clergy and wrote:

Your dutie is to hear the voyce of the Eternal your God, and unfainedly to studie to follow his preceptes; who, as is before said, of especiall mercie hath promoted you to honours and dignitie. His chefe and principall precept is, that with reverence ye receave and embrace his onlie beloved Sonne Jesus; that ye promote, to the uttermost of your powers, his true religion; and that ye defend your brethren and subjectes whome he hath putt under your charge and care.⁴⁷

⁴² Greaves, 'John Knox, the Reformed Tradition, and the Development of Resistance Theory', p. 18.

⁴³ W. Stanford Reid, 'John Knox's Theology of Political Government', *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 19, no. 4 (Winter 1988), p. 538.

⁴⁴ Reid, 'Knox's Theology of Political Government', p. 538.

⁴⁵ *Appellation*, p. 491. [Italics Mine]

⁴⁶ *Appellation*, p. 491.

⁴⁷ *Appellation*, p. 495.

Knox expanded this duty further and introduced the notion that the civil magistrate was subject to punishment for the failings of his king and seemed to be expanding the perceived office of the king to the magistrates themselves. As an example, Knox declared that if the magistrates failed in protecting the subjects of the realm, ‘they provoke the wrath of God against themselves and against the realme in which they abuse the auctoritie, which they have receaved of God, to mentaine vertue and to repress vice’.⁴⁸ It was through this purpose that ideas of resistance and revolt began to take hold. Many more sources throughout his *Appellation* and *Book of Discipline* underscored the elevated role that Knox had for Jesus, as the theocratic ruler above all rulers.

Like Calvin and Knox, Andrew Melville and the post-Reformation Presbyterian ministers made the distinction again between the eternal and temporal kingdoms. However, they utilised the two kingdoms doctrine to illustrate the limits of the king’s power and authority under the church of Jesus Christ and not to excuse the king from his duty.⁴⁹ Melville and the other Presbyterian ministers who affirmed *The Second Book of Discipline* avowed that civil and ecclesiastical powers are separate, yet both originated with God. In stating this, they subjected both church and state to God as the supreme magistrate and minister, where it read, ‘alwayis onder ane Head and cheif governour, Jesus Chryst’.⁵⁰ David VanDrunen summarised this interpretation that ‘God rules the civil kingdom as its creator and sustainer but rules the spiritual

⁴⁸ *Appellation*, p. 497.

⁴⁹ James Kirk, *The Second Book of Discipline* (Edinburgh: St Andrews Press, 1980), p. 243-244. [Afterwards referred to as *Second Book of Discipline*].

⁵⁰ *Second Book of Discipline*, p. 173.

kingdom as its redeemer'.⁵¹ In a similar manner, Robert Emery offered insight into the radicalism of the Covenanters' definition of the two kingdoms as 'the equality and mutual independence of church and state, with each acting in a coordinated capacity to further divine mandates of Christ Jesus, king of both church and state alike'.⁵² As defined, this understanding continued with Samuel Rutherford.

One of the chief and profound works to influence the Covenanters understanding of civil and ecclesiastical governance was Samuel Rutherford's, *Lex, Rex*.⁵³ In it, Rutherford, maintained the continuity from Calvin, Knox, and others, and made a definitive distinction concerning the *eternal and temporal* kingdoms. He wrote, 'that which is eternal, and cannot politically die, yea, which must continue as the days of heaven, because of God's promise, is more excellent than that which is both accidental, temporary, and mortal'.⁵⁴ He also stressed the subordination of the civil and ecclesiastical to God in the following eighth argument and wrote:

Consider the king materially as a mortal man, he must be inferior to the whole church, for he is but one, and so of less worth than the whole church; as the thumb, though the strongest of the fingers, yet it is inferior to the hand, and far more to the whole body, as any part is inferior to the whole.⁵⁵

⁵¹ David VanDrunen, 'The Two Kingdoms: A Reassessment of the Transformationist Calvin' in *Calvin Theological Journal*, vol 40, no. 2 (November 2005), p. 252.

⁵² Robert Emery, 'Church and State in the Early Republic: The Covenanters' Radical Critique', *Journal of Law and Religion* 25, no 2 (2009-2010), pp. 487-8.

⁵³ Samuel Rutherford, *Lex, Rex, or the Law and the Prince; a Dispute for the Just Prerogative of King and People: Containing the Reasons and Causes of the Most Necessary Defensive Wars of the Kingdom of Scotland, and of Their Expedition for the Aid and Help of Their Dear Brethren of England; in which Their Innocency is Asserted, and a Full Answer is Given to a Seditious Pamphlet, Entituled, "Sacro-sancta Regum Majestas," or the Sacred and Royal Prerogative of Christian Kings; under the name of J.A., but Penned by John Maxwell ... In forty-four Questions*. [London: 1644] (Colorado Springs, CO: Portage Publications, 2009). [Afterwards referred to as *Lex, Rex*].

⁵⁴ *Lex, Rex*, p. 144.

⁵⁵ *Lex, Rex*, p. 145.

However, in addition to the notion of the temporal being subordinate to the eternal, there was a shift in the understanding of exactly what made up a kingdom or nation. J.C.D. Clark noted that ‘by the 1640s, denominational discourse (following Jeremiah 18, 7-10) treated “kingdom” and “nation” as almost synonymous: Puritans like other Anglicans by now assumed an identity of church and state’.⁵⁶ Although Clark used one source, Calamy’s sermon from 1641, to prove this idea or ‘discourse’ as he referred to it, was something that had been around for many years. Nonetheless, this discourse aided in the shifting interpretation of the role that the church played in the nation, specifically through understanding dominion. Rutherford affirmed that:

The law saith there is no law of nature agreeing to all living creatures for superiority; for by no reason in nature hath a boar dominion over a boar, a lion over a lion, a dragon over a dragon, a bull over a bull: and if all men be born equally free, as I hope to prove, there is no reason in nature why one man should be king and lord over another.⁵⁷

As a result of this understanding, Rutherford introduced matters of so-called ‘natural rights’ and the duty of election and even rebellion in Scotland.⁵⁸ Following in the footsteps of George Buchanan, Rutherford determined that the ‘fountain-power’ of dominion rested ‘most eminently’ with the people as their ‘natural rights’.⁵⁹ He asserted that:

in both considerations the king is inferior to the people; or though he command the people, and so have an executive power of law above them, yet have they a fountain-

⁵⁶ J.C.D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660-1832: Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 51.

⁵⁷ *Lex, Rex*, pp. 3-4.

⁵⁸ Matters concerning ‘natural rights’ was not a new idea from Rutherford; rather, Johannes Althusius introduced a more comprehensive understanding of Natural Law previously. For a succinct summary of this, see John Witte, Jr. ‘A Demonstrative Theory of Natural law: Johannes Althusius and the Rise of Calvinist Jurisprudence’ in *Ecclesiastical Law Society* 11, issue 3 (September 2009), pp. 248-265.

⁵⁹ Buchanan was a prominent theologian and tutor to King James VI. He wrote a text that taught subjects must obey good kings, whereas people were not obligated to obey tyrants in his work, *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*. See George Buchanan, *De Jure Regni apud Scotos; a dialogue concerning the rights of the crown in Scotland*, trans. Robert MacFarlan [reprint of 1799 edition]. (Colorado Springs: Portage Publications, Inc. 2009), pp. 39 and 56.

power above him, because they made him king, and in God's intention he is given as king for their good, according to this, "Thou shalt feed my people Israel," and that, "I gave him for a leader of my people".⁶⁰

Rutherford demonstrated his own sense of a 'quasi-theocracy' when he wrote that, 'arbitrary governing hath no alliance with God', and asserted that Jesus was the 'supreme Judge of all the earth'.⁶¹ As a nation, Rutherford held to an interpretation of Scotland as a new 'Zion', and it was through his Zionist ideals concerning Scotland that Rutherford sincerely believed he was on the side of God.⁶² Because of this, he argued that if the king did anything contrary to the people of Scotland, he then opposed God's chosen people, thus making it just to resist. This was where Calvin's warning against a 'Jewish vanity' was quite prophetic.⁶³

As an example of his evolving interpretation of magistracy, Rutherford blurred the distinction between the authority of the king and the king himself. Agreeing with Calvin, Rutherford emphasised the office demanded obedience and not the person *per se*. This is seen clearly under question twenty-nine in *Lex, Rex*, where he wrote, 'We must needs be subject to the royal office for conscience, by reason of the fifth commandment; but we must not needs be subject to the man who is king, if he command things unlawful'.⁶⁴ However, when examining this further, he argued and provided justification for resisting the person, and not the office. Rutherford, by obscuring this distinction justified rebellion, and he argued in more detail to 'give us leave to resist a king turning a cruel tyrant; but Paul (Rom. xiii.) forbiddeth us to

⁶⁰ *Lex, Rex*, p. 186.

⁶¹ *Lex, Rex*, pp. 28 & 411.

⁶² *Letters*, Rutherford uses the word 'Zion' in 110 of his letters, whereas he uses 'covenant' in 92 of his letters. Of these letters, 38 letters with use both 'Zion' and 'covenant' in the same letter.

⁶³ *Institutes*, p. 1168.

⁶⁴ *Lex, Rex*, p. 259.

resist the power, *in abstracto*; therefore, it must be the man, *in concreto*, that we must resist'.⁶⁵ With this, Rutherford crept beyond the notion of passive resistance, as justified by Knox, into territories of outright rebellion. I argue below that it was through this understanding that the Covenanters justified resistance as means of self-defence. This is additionally seen in the works of James Stewart of Goodtrees.

The next generation of Scottish Covenanters further expanded the interpretation regarding magistracy prompting justification for resistance as seen in the writings of Sir James Stewart.⁶⁶ Stewart, along with Rev James Stirling wrote *Naphtali: or the Wrestling of the Church of Scotland for the Kingdom of Christ* in response to the Pentland Rising of 1666. Together they propelled the ideas of Knox and Rutherford concerning civil and ecclesiastical matters within covenanting thought. A few other letters, confessions, and declarations substantiated this evolving interpretation of the magistracy in Scotland such as Donald Cargill's, *Queensferry Paper* and Richard Cameron's, *Sanquhar Declaration*.⁶⁷ Calvin established within his *Institutes* that resistance must occur within the existing public order.⁶⁸ Yet, the theory of resistance

⁶⁵ *Lex, Rex*, p. 259.

⁶⁶ James Stewart, *Naphtali, or, The wrestlings of the Church of Scotland for the kingdom of Christ contained in a true and short deduction thereof, from the beginning of the reformation of religion, until the year 1667 : together with the last speeches and testimonies of some who have died for the truth since the year 1660* (Edinburgh: s.n., 1667) [Hereafter *Naphtali*] and James Stewart, *Jus populi vindicatum, or, The peoples right to defend themselves and their covenanted religion vindicated wherein the act of defence and vindication which was interprised anno 1666 is particularly justified ... being a reply to the first part of Survey of Naphtaly &c. / by a friend to true Christian liberty* (London: s.n., 1669) [Hereafter *Jus populi*].

⁶⁷ Donald Cargill, *A true and exact copy of a treasonable and bloody-paper called the Fanaticks new-covenant which was taken from Mr. Donald Cargill at Queens-Ferry the third day of June, anno Dom. 1680 one of their field-preachers, a declared rebel and traitor ; together with their execrable declaration published at the Cross of Sanquhair upon the twenty two day of the said month of June after a solemn procession and singing of Psalms by Cameron the notorious ring-leader of and preacher at their field-conventicles, accompanied with twenty of that wretched crew* (Edinburgh: Printed by Heir of Andrew Anderson, 1680) and Richard Cameron, 'Sanquhar Declaration' in Robert Wodrow, *The History of the Sufferings of the Church of Scotland from the Restoration to the Revolution*, Book III (Glasgow: Blackie, Fullerton, & Co., 1828), pp. 212-213.

⁶⁸ *Institutes*, 4.22-32, pp. 1184-1192.

as given by John Knox and James Stewart in many ways countered the existing order. Covenanters may have been Calvinist in their soteriology, but not specifically Calvinists within their political understanding. The Covenanters were more in line with Knox and Stewart than Calvin as it pertained to matters of resistance and later revolution. There were agreements in a few areas that pertained to magistracy. For example, these outlined matters of the heavenly reigning over the earthly as Calvin and Knox advocated. Likewise, they promoted the ideas of limiting the king's authority as Rutherford and Stewart prescribed. However, the subtle nuances over this period became 'radicalised' further as Covenanters promoted a rationalisation for resistance and later used this to justify revolution.

'Resistance to Tyrants is Obedience to God'

Since the Reformation, there was a constant battle between Protestants and the established church. The theory of resistance within covenanting thought relied heavily on the Covenanters' sense of what constituted tyranny. The theory or notion of resistance in the early modern period was not a new concept as it had some roots in the Roman Catholic tradition throughout continental Europe, especially during the religious wars in France.⁶⁹ The Catholic understanding of resistance, specifically Conciliar theory 'was the central insistence that the final authority in the Church lay not with the Pope but with the whole body of the faithful and that the Pope possessed, therefore, not an absolute but merely a ministerial authority delegated to him for the

⁶⁹ For an elaborate summary of the varying resistance theories within Roman Catholicism, see J.H.M. Salmon, 'Catholic resistance theory, Ultramontanist, and the royalist response, 1580-1620', in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700*, eds. J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 219-253.

good of the Church'.⁷⁰ As a result, the conciliarists established civil authority and the rights to resist tyranny as taught throughout Europe. One student returned to Scotland bringing with him this understanding of resistance – John Major.⁷¹ Through the influence of John Major (Mair) upon John Knox and George Buchanan, this idea flourished.⁷² Within the protestant church and specifically the Calvinist tradition, a tyrant was in some cases both physical and spiritual. Ryan Croft wrote of John Ponet and other Marian Exiles that 'as for other writers who approached politics from a theological perspective, a tyrant serves as an agent of the devil and rises to power because of a nation's sins'.⁷³ He went on to express how this understanding originated with the fall of Adam in the Genesis account.⁷⁴

Two prominent works summarising the origins of the Calvinist theory of resistance are Quentin Skinner's *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* and Michael Walzer's *The Revolution of the Saints*.⁷⁵ Skinner and Walzer both agreed that Calvin was not the creator of radical resistance theory although Calvinists tended to lead

⁷⁰ Francis Oakley, 'On the Road from Constance to 1688: The Political Thought of John Major and George Buchanan' in *Journal of British Studies* 1, no. 2 (1962). p. 1.

⁷¹ Oakley, 'On the Road from Constance to 1688', pp. 5-6 & 11-19.

⁷² John Major, who was the instructor to George Buchanan and John Knox at St Andrews, introduced this theory in Scotland. It evolved from 15th century philosophy to 16th and 17th century ideas within theology through writings such as Christopher Goodman, *How Superior Powers ought to be obeyed of their subjects, and wherein they may lawfully be by God's word disobeyed and resisted* (Geneva, 1558), John Ponet, *A Short Treatise of politike power, and of the true Obedience which Subjects owe to kynges and other civile Governours* (Strasbourg: 1556; RSTC 20178; facs. Edn Menton: Scholar Press, 1970); and Theodore Beza, *De jure magistratuum: (On the Rights of Magistrates): Concerning the Rights of Rulers over Their Subjects and the Duty of Subjects to Their Rulers. A brief and clear treatise particularly indispensable to either class in these troubled times.* (1574).

⁷³ Ryan Croft, 'Sanctified Tyrannicide: Tyranny and Theology in John Ponet's Shorte Treatise of Politike Power and Edmund Spenser's The Faerie Queene' in *Studies in Philology* 108, no 4 (Fall 2011), p. 540.

⁷⁴ Croft, 'Sanctified Tyrannicide', pp. 540-542.

⁷⁵ Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought: Volume 2, The Age of Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978) and Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study in the Origins of Radical Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965).

many of the revolutions throughout Europe. 'It was the Calvinists', Walzer asserted early in his work 'who first switched the emphasis of political thought ... and then constructed a theoretical justification for independent political action', and he avowed that 'they formed the basis for the new politics of revolution and shaped the character of the revolutionary'.⁷⁶ It is through this new 'character of the revolutionary' that one must understand the Covenanters' interpretation of resistance.

Although no one specifically knows the origins of the phrase, 'Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God', the idea behind the phrase came from John Knox in his small pamphlet written in 1558, *The Appellation from the Cruel and Most Unjust Sentence Pronounced against Him by the false Bishops and Clergy of Scotland*. He wrote:

But because this is not my chefe ground, I wil stand content for this present [time] to shew, that lawfull it is to Goddes Prophetes, and to preachers of Christ Jesus, to Appeall from the sentence and judgment of the visible church to the knolledge of the temporall Magistrate, who by Goddes law is bound to hear their causes, and to defend them from tyrannie.⁷⁷

He went on and wrote that, 'lawfull it is to the servantes of God, oppressed by tyrannie, to seke remedie against the same, be it by appellation from their sentence, or by imploring the helpe of Civil Magistrates'.⁷⁸ Knox was the first to acknowledge resistance to tyranny as linked with obedience to God and in a sense salvation itself.

Concerning salvation, he wrote that the obligation of the church and its members:

By your offices ye be bound, not only to repress their tyrannie, but also to punishe them as theves and murtherers, as idolaters and blasphemers of God, and in their rounes ye are bounde to place true preachers of Christ's Evangile, for the instruction,

⁷⁶ Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints*, p. 2.

⁷⁷ *Appellation*, p. 472.

⁷⁸ *Appellation*, p. 478.

comfort, and salvation of your subjectes, above whome els shall never the Holy Ghost acknowledge that you rule in justice for their proffit.⁷⁹

Bearing this in mind, for Knox and other later Presbyterians, salvation correlated directly with the notion of covenant with God. Tyranny became a violation of a divine relationship between God and humankind, which promoted the call for an aggressive doctrine of resistance and later revolution. Glenn Moots in his book, *Politics Reformed* wrote that, ‘the notion of an argument only from nature does not create the same kind of moral imperative as one that is tied to personal revelation and divine judgment ... This makes covenantal political theory a political theology par excellence’.⁸⁰ However, this required a redefining of tyranny and further establishing the conditional aspect of the covenant. This covenantal imperative was more radical and dangerous than the idea of man’s natural rights as promoted by John Locke and others.

Rutherford’s notion of resistance, published in *Lex, Rex* in 1644, was radical well before Locke’s *Second Treatise*, published in 1690. Many ministers throughout Scotland, England, and Ireland were familiar with Rutherford’s work. For example, one of the bishops attending the Westminster Assembly, Henry Guthrie observed:

Every member of the assembly “had in his hand that book lately published by Mr Samuel Rutherford, which was so idolized, that whereas Buchanan’s treatise (*De Jure Regni apud Scotos*) was looked upon as an oracle, this coming forth, it was slighted as not anti-monarchical enough, and Rutherford’s *Lex Rex* only thought authentic”.⁸¹

For Locke, the political order was superior to religion. Whereas for Rutherford and those of covenanting thought, as Peter Richards noted, ‘the starting point of Christian

⁷⁹ *Appellation*, p. 485.

⁸⁰ Glenn A. Moots, *Politics Reformed: The Anglo-American Legacy of Covenant Theology*, (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2010), p. 65.

⁸¹ *Lex, Rex*, p. xxii.

doctrine concerning man's vertical relationship to God underlies and informs the horizontal political order'.⁸² As such, Rutherford believed that if a government proved to be abusive of its powers, this was a violation of the covenant and merited resistance. Rutherford wrote that:

A political society, as by nature's instinct they may appoint a head, or heads to themselves, so also if their head, or heads, become ravenous wolves, the God of nature hath not left a perfect society remediless; but they may both resist, and punish the head, or heads, to whom they gave all the power that they have, for their good, not for their destruction.⁸³

James Stewart further propagated this idea of resistance to rulers who forfeited their duty in protecting the people. In *Naphtali*, Stewart set out:

That as all Societies, Governments and Lawes are appointed in a due Subordination to God and His superior Will and Law, for His Glory and the Common Good of the People, including the safety of every individual; so, if either this Subordination be notoriously infringed, or these Ends intollerably perverted, the common tie of both Society, Government and Law, is in so far dissolved. Hence is it that a King or Rulers commanding things directly contrary to the Law of God, may be and have been justly disobeyed, and by fury or folly destroying or alienating the Kingdome, may be and have been lawfully resisted.⁸⁴

Stewart agreed with Knox that resistance correlated with obedience and duty, but that this duty was in self-defence as set out in the sixty-eighth question of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*.

If ever one were seeking to find the complete summary regarding the dutiful resistance theory within covenanting thought, one needs to look no further than

⁸² Peter Judson Richards, "'The Law Written in Their Hearts'?: Rutherford and Locke on Nature, Government and Resistance' in *Journal of Law and Religion*, vol. 18, no. 1 (2002-2003), p. 160.

⁸³ *Lex, Rex*, pp. 209 & 231.

⁸⁴ *Naphtali*, pp. 148-149.

Alexander Shields's *A Hind Let Loose*.⁸⁵ Political theorists and historians often overlook Shields and his contribution to radical Presbyterian resistance theory. In *A Hind Let Loose*, he summarised and simplified the works of Buchanan, Knox, Rutherford, and Stewart detailing the essentials of justified resistance. Summarising *Jus Populi*, Shields determined that the people:

Had the power of choosing what Kind of Government suited most to their advantage, and would best preserve their Liberties,... with a reservation of the Priviledge to their own safety, if their Associates should not do their duty:... And however it be, yet still by the peoples consent: And in all this to have respect to some good, great, & Necessary Ends, which if they should be disappointed of, and find these means useless or destructive to, they were to be loosed from their obligation to use or to oune them. *See Ius populi vindicat. ch. 5. pag. 80. &c. 2.*⁸⁶

Ian Smart paraphrased this as the people being 'released from their obligation to government if it proved destructive to the ends of the glory of God and the good of mankind'.⁸⁷

The Covenanters believed that the federal understanding of God's relationship as the head of humankind and nations was the standard by which governments existed. Likewise, they elevated the role of the community in the establishing of a government and emphasised that the consensus of the people undergirded the government, regardless of the form. As noted above, the very foundation of Covenant Theology

⁸⁵ Alexander Shields, *A Hind Let Loose, or, An historical representation of the testimonies of the Church of Scotland for the interest of Christ with the true state thereof in all its periods : together with a vindication of the present testimonie, against the Popish, prelatical, & malignant enemies of that church ... : wherein several controversies of greatest consequence are enquired into, and in some measure cleared, concerning hearing of the curats, owning of the present tyrannie, taking of ensnaring oaths & bonds, frequenting of field meetings, defensive resistance of tyrannical violence ... / by a lover of true liberty*, (np, 1687)

⁸⁶ Shields, *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 340

⁸⁷ Smart, 'The Political Ideas of the Scottish Covenanters', p. 190.

was the federal understanding of God as the head of the church and the state. As

Richard Niebuhr noted:

Covenant meant that political society was neither purely natural nor merely contractual, based on common interest. Covenant was the binding together in one body politic of persons who assumed through unlimited promise responsibility to and for each other and for the common laws, under God. It was government of the people, for the people, and by the people but always under God.⁸⁸

Although the Presbyterian cause shifted from its original aim, as Perry Miller expressed, the ‘protestant political thinking had never doubted, of course that God instituted government among men as a means towards their temporal felicity’.⁸⁹

Coupled with this federal headship of God, the Covenanters readily established leagues and covenants between kingdoms as evidenced with the Solemn League and Covenant of 1643, which was between the General Assembly of the Scottish Kirk and the English Parliament.

Just as Knox had distinct rules concerning the establishment of education, he subscribed to an elevated role that community played in the establishment of government. ‘As one looks back to the Protestant Reformation’ as Reid has pointed out ‘one finds that John Knox developed the doctrine of the covenant very clearly, not just as a theological concept, but also as a political theory’.⁹⁰ This elevated role of the community demonstrated a representative understanding within covenanting thought. Knox affirmed an equality among all peoples of which he referred to as a

⁸⁸ Richard Niebuhr, ‘The Idea of Covenant and American Democracy’ in *Church History*, vol. 23, no. 2, (June 1954), p. 133.

⁸⁹ Perry Miller, ‘From the Covenant to the Revival’ in *The Shaping of American Religion*, eds. James Ward Smith and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 344.

⁹⁰ Reid, ‘Knox’s Theology of Political Government’, p. 529.

‘commonalty’.⁹¹ After writing his *Appellation* to the nobility of Scotland, he provided a ‘Letter Addressed to the Commonalty of Scotland’. In it, he wrote:

God has put and ordained distinction and difference between the King and Subjects, between Rulers and the Common-people in the Regiment and Administration of Civil Policies, yet in the hope of the life to come he has made all equal; for as in Christ Jesus the Jew has not greater Prerogative than has the Gentile, the man than has the woman, the learned than the unlearned, the lord than the servant, but all are one in him.⁹²

Through this temporal interpretation, Knox demonstrated the differences between subjects and nobility. However, through the eternal perspective, Knox elevated the common citizen to an equal position with the nobility and monarchy because of the federal head, Jesus. As such, with this understanding of equality, he presented the importance of the public good and safety within the church and the state to the people of Scotland.⁹³ This was equally evident in the teaching of Rutherford.

Rutherford held to a federal understanding of God as the supreme head of the church and state.⁹⁴ He eloquently justified monarchy throughout *Lex, Rex*. However, like Knox, he promoted the equality of humanity. Rutherford asserted that all men were equal in creation. He wrote:

The law saith there is no law of nature agreeing to all living creatures for superiority; for by no reason in nature hath a boar dominion over a boar, a lion over a lion, a dragon over a dragon, a bull over a bull: and if all men be born equally free, as I hope to prove, there is no reason in nature why one man should be king and lord over another.⁹⁵

⁹¹ John Knox, *A Letter Addressed to the Commonalty of Scotland* (Geneva, 1558) in *The Works of John Knox*, vol. IV, ed. David Laing (Edinburgh: Johnstone and Hunter, 1855), pp. 521-538.

⁹² Knox, *A Letter Addressed to the Commonalty of Scotland*, p. 527. [Translated to modern English]

⁹³ Knox was not the originator of this notion. Reid detailed the potential influencers in Knox’s life in his article, ‘John Knox’s Theology of Political Government’, pp. 530-532.

⁹⁴ *Lex, Rex*, pp. 204-248.

⁹⁵ *Lex, Rex*, pp. 3-4.

Because of this egalitarian understanding, Rutherford asserted that governments, although ordained by God, occurred through the consensus of the people. He wrote ‘In every government where there is democracy, there is some chosen ones resembling an aristocracy, and some one (*sic*) for order, presiding in democratical courts, resembling a king’. He then argued this point as ‘power and absolute monarchy is tyranny; unmixed democracy is confusion; untampered aristocracy is factious dominion; and a limited monarchy hath from democracy respect to public good, without confusion’.⁹⁶ Rutherford later declared that ‘the limited monarch is as essentially the Lord’s anointed, and the power ordained of God, as the absolute monarch’.⁹⁷ In addition, Donald Cargill, mimicked Rutherford’s teaching regarding limiting monarchy and the people establishing a government for themselves in his *Queensferry Paper* and wrote:

We do declare that we shall set up over ourselves and over what God shall give us power of, government and governors according to the Word of God;... that we shall no more commit the government of ourselves and the making of laws for us, to any one single person,... and this kind of government by a single person being most liable to inconveniences, and aptest to degenerate into tyranny.⁹⁸

Likewise, James Stewart in his work, *Jus Populi Vindicatum* promoted egalitarian representation, yet he pushed beyond Rutherford.⁹⁹ This egalitarian or public consensus ideology from Knox, Rutherford, Cargill, and Stewart later evolved in America with a different understanding concerning the establishment of government.

⁹⁶ *Lex, Rex*, p. 208.

⁹⁷ *Lex, Rex*, p. 212.

⁹⁸ Cargill, *A true and exact copy of a treasonable and bloody-paper called the Fanaticks new-covenant which was taken from Mr. Donald Cargill at Queens-Ferry*, pp. 6-7.

⁹⁹ Neil McIntyre, ‘Representation and Resistance in Restoration Scotland: The political thought of James Stewart of Goodtrees (1635-1713)’ in *Parliaments, Estates, and Representation* 38, no 2, (2018), pp. 170-172.

Chapter 3 – Information

Roots of American Covenanting Thought

Mark Noll pointed out that ‘individual Christians took varied courses of action in response to the Revolutionary crisis, and widely dissimilar motives often lay behind the outwardly similar reactions to the Revolution's events and ideas’.¹ One such group that took this varied course with dissimilar motives to the New England Puritans were the radical Presbyterians in the backcountry of North Carolina. A shifting dynamic took place in Scotland and Ireland that prompted a migration of ideas. Covenanting ideology journeyed first to Ireland, specifically Ulster and later moved to America.² Many of the same attributes that described the Scottish Covenanters were prevalent in the Irish and American Covenanters. Rankin Sherling has written that ‘Irish, not Scottish ministers were largely responsible for founding, building and sustaining a church for Covenanters in America’.³ From 1688 to 1776, this was a time of transition for the Covenanters and the transmission of covenanting thought throughout Scotland, Ireland, and America. It was also a time of great shifts throughout Presbyterianism that served to help ‘normalise’ covenanting thought and political theology. The primary aim of this chapter is to focus on the ideas within American covenanting thought, and how the people in the backcountry of North Carolina learned and interpreted them as they migrated from Scotland and Ireland. A.R. Holmes rightly

¹ Mark A. Noll, *Christians in the American Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: Christian University Press, 1977), p. 11.

² For the best examination concerning the migration of the Covenanters during the period that this thesis focuses, please see Emily Moberg Robinson, ‘Immigrant Covenanters: Religious and Political Identity, from Scotland to America’, (PhD Dissertation: University of California, Santa Cruz, 2004), pp. 207-249.

³ Rankin Sherling, ‘Selective Remembrance: Scottish sensibilities and forgotten Irish contributions to Reformed Presbyterianism in America’ in *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, (May 2013), p. 159.

warned that ‘more attention ought to be devoted to the specific historical and cultural contexts in which certain politico-religious ideologies were forged rather than projecting contemporary concerns back upon the past’.⁴ At various times throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Scottish Presbyterian Kirk compromised with the monarchy concerning church governance. As a result, this led to divisions throughout the church with the two largest groups being the Associate Presbytery and the Reformed Presbytery. These same factions existed within the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

Migration to Ireland

In the seventeenth century, between 1605 and 1690, many Scots moved to Ireland for economic, political, and religious reasons settling in Ulster. Just as the Scots struggled with the government and the established church in Scotland, these troubles continued in Ireland and in some cases, they struggled more. In 1603, King James VI and I struck an accord with two Scottish Lairds for two counties in Ulster ‘on condition “that the lands should be planted with British Protestants”’.⁵ In 1609 the king decided to allow Scots to participate in the plantation. So, the Scottish Privy Council requested applications from those seeking land in Ireland, and they received seventy-seven applications. The Privy Council approved fifty-nine Scots to receive 81,000 acres in Ulster. James Leyburn noted that this had a lasting effect as ‘those counties planted primarily by Scots continued to show a predominance of Presbyterianism’.⁶

Additional religious motivation for migration began around 1660 after the restoration

⁴ Andrew R. Holmes, ‘Covenanter Politics: Evangelicalism, Political Liberalism and Ulster Presbyterians, 1798–1914’, *The English Historical Review* 125, no. 513 (March 2010), p. 369.

⁵ James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962), p. 88.

⁶ Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, p. 93.

of Charles II to the throne and deemed the Covenants unlawful in 1662. The period from 1662-1688 was quite tumultuous for the Covenanters in Scotland. In contrast, there was general autonomy in Ulster and the Presbyterians avoided these problems, which provided motivation for the Scottish Lowlanders to leave Scotland. The conflict over the church finally ended when William II & III assumed the throne in 1689 and re-established the Presbyterian Kirk. The end of the Scottish migration to Ulster came with the Act of Union of 1707.

Presbyterians in Ireland

Whether in Scotland or Ireland, the Covenanters relied upon their propensity to dissension and division. As outlined previously regarding the Scottish Presbyterians, it is equally important to make the distinction between the broader labels and branches concerning denominational history within Irish Presbyterianism.⁷ Again, all Scottish Covenanters were Presbyterian, but not all Presbyterians were Covenanters. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland came about as a result of Scottish immigration in the seventeenth century. In many ways they were akin to the Scottish Presbyterian Kirk, which faced turmoil from outside the church. The Presbyterian Church in Ireland experienced scrutiny from Catholics and Anglicans. In response to the Irish Catholic uprising in 1641, some of the Irish Presbyterians joined themselves to the National Covenant of Scotland as it sought to root out popery, prelacy, and heresy. Like the Scots, some Irish Presbyterians remained uncovenanted. Although the Ulster Presbyterians sought 'to keep Scottish divisions out of their church in Ireland', they

⁷ For more about the Covenanters in Ireland, see Adam Loughridge, *The Covenanters in Ireland: A History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, (Belfast: Cameron Press, 1984).

mimicked their Scottish counterparts and quickly had infighting and divisions.⁸ For example, in 1719, John Abernethy, a minister in Antrim published a sermon where he elevated the ‘natural’ reason within church governance. In response, John Malcome accused Abernethy of ‘pretending to give new light to the world by pushing personal persuasion in the room of church government and discipline’.⁹ Those who held to Abernethy’s viewpoint became known as ‘New Lights’, whereas those opposite were ‘Old Lights’.¹⁰ Congregationalists later used these terms in the American Colonies for similar purposes, but more often as a response to divergent religious experiences.¹¹ Further divisions continued to occur within the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Irish Presbyterians agreed with Ebenezer Erskine and the others who seceded from the Scottish Presbyterian Kirk, and in 1741, a few Irish ministers separated and formed the Secession Church. The Irish Presbyterians were again like the Scottish as the Irish Seceders divided between the Burghers and Antiburghers.¹²

Just as the Patronage Act caused anxiety for the Presbyterians in Scotland, the Anglican Sacramental Test Act of 1704 caused upheaval in Ulster. In 1704, Parliament passed the Test Act, which prohibited Presbyterian ministers in Ireland from conducting marriages and were not legally recognised. This law also prohibited members of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland from holding civic positions without

⁸ Finlay Holmes, *The Presbyterian Church in Ireland: A Popular History*, (Dublin: The Columbia Press, 2000), p. 41.

⁹ Quote found in Finlay Holmes, *Our Irish Presbyterian Heritage*, (Antrim: Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 1985), p. 64.

¹⁰ Holmes, *Our Irish Presbyterian Heritage*, p. 64; Ian McBride, *Scripture Politics: Ulster Presbyterians and Irish Radicalism in the Late Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 84-109; and David Stewart, *The Seceders in Ireland with Annals of their Congregations*, (Belfast: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1950), p. 34.

¹¹ Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in America, updated edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 149-152.

¹² Stewart, *The Seceders in Ireland*, pp. 67-203.

first becoming a member of the Anglican Church. By this time, many of the Scots who migrated to Ulster were very wealthy and were the civil leaders. The Test Act meant that they had to choose between their religious or civil principles. This prompted large-scale migration.¹³ Kirby Miller recorded that one Presbyterian minister in response to the oppression from the Anglican Church, James McGregor ‘delivered a farewell sermon, charging that he and his people were fleeing Ireland “to avoid oppression and cruel bondage, to shun persecution and designed ruin ... and to have an opportunity of worshipping God according to the dictates of conscience and the rules of His Inspired Word.”’¹⁴ The Scots-Irish began to leave in large numbers from Ulster and took their own form of Presbyterianism to America with them.

Migration to America

According to Leyburn, there were five major migrations that occurred from Ireland between 1717 and 1775.¹⁵ The first was in result of the Test Act of 1704. The subsequent migrations occurred in response to rack-renting and economic depression in 1725-1729. Famine triggered the third migration between 1740-1741. The fourth migration was in response to the extreme drought between 1754-1755. The final migration occurred between 1771-1775 again because of extreme economic depression. He further noted that North Carolina benefited most from the third and fourth migrations.¹⁶ ‘Throughout the fifty-eight years of the Great Migration’ according to Leyburn, ‘religious liberty had been a motive only at the beginning. It is

¹³ Stewart, *The Seceders in Ireland*, pp. 165-172.

¹⁴ Kirby A. Miller, *Ireland and Irish America: Culture, Class, and Transatlantic Migration*, (Dublin: Field Day Publications, 2008), p. 126.

¹⁵ Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, p. 169

¹⁶ James G. Leyburn, ‘Presbyterian Immigrants and the American Revolution’ in *Journal of Presbyterian History* (1962-1985) 54, no. 1 (1976), pp. 15-16 and Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, pp. 169-175 & 210-223.

nonetheless significant, both for Ireland and America, that those who left Ulster were almost all Presbyterians'.¹⁷ These settlers in North Carolina were newly arrived immigrants or the sons of earlier immigrants who were unable to afford the land in Pennsylvania or Virginia and moved south along the Great Wagon Road where land was affordable.¹⁸

Presbyterians in America

Historians of the Presbyterian Church in America detailed how it began with matters of discord and opposition in Ireland and migrated to America.¹⁹ Francis Makemie formed the first Presbyterian churches in America on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. Ordained in Ulster, Makemie came to America in 1683 and organized five churches. Around this same period, English and Welsh Presbyterians as well as Huguenots formed other Presbyterian churches in the middle colonies. These churches organized the first presbytery in Philadelphia in 1706 made up of seven ministers from Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania. By 1716, the number of Presbyterian Churches had grown to the extent that they formed the first synod. The Synod of Philadelphia consisted of four presbyteries: Long Island, Philadelphia, New Castle, and Snow Hill.²⁰ This became the mainstream Presbyterian denomination throughout the Colonies, but it too fell prey to the propensity for division.

¹⁷ Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, p. 175.

¹⁸ Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish*, pp. 210-223 and David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 747-765.

¹⁹ Leonard J. Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition: A Re-Examination of Colonial Presbyterianism* (New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1949), pp. 38-52.

²⁰ Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition*, pp. 15-37.

Old Side—New Side

In 1740, the revivalist George Whitefield made the first of his seven visits to America and helped to spark the Great Awakening. During this time, Whitefield inspired ministers of various denominations to revive ‘their methods to fit the demands of a new environment, the laity had scarcely changed from their original commitment to emotional piety and revival’.²¹ This led to problems with these denominations, including the Presbyterian Church, which split into two groups. The Old Side—New Side debate took place specifically within the Presbyterian Church, but historians refer to the larger debate, which included Congregationalists and other denominations throughout the colonies as the Old Light and New Light debate. These should not be confused with the Scottish divisions of Auld Licht and New Licht. The Auld Licht adhered to the Solemn League and Covenant, whereas the New Licht did not. Therefore, some of the New Side Presbyterian ministers in America were Auld Licht. Patricia Bonomi further summarised the Old Side—New Side debate as the ‘disagreements over theological emphasis, professional standards, and centralized authority were the most immediate causes of the Presbyterian schism, but other differences between Old and New Sides had the effect of making the conflict sharper’.²² Regarding the professional standards, this revolved around the forbidding of itinerant preaching. One cantankerous minister, Alexander Craighead violated this when he preached at Francis Alison’s pulpit.²³ The Donegal Presbytery charged

²¹ Marilyn J. Westerkamp, *Triumph of the Laity: Scots-Irish Piety and the Great Awakening, 1625-1760* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p. 167.

²² Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven*, p. 145.

²³ Presbyterian Church in the USA Synod of New York and Philadelphia, *Minutes of Donegal Presbytery: 1732-1750* (Microfilm. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1966), p. 202 and *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod, 1706-1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1904), p. 154.

Craighead for requiring terms of communion upon Alison's parishioners at the baptism of their children to affirm the Solemn League and Covenant.²⁴ In response, Craighead, along with three others formed the Presbytery of Londonderry, which was combined with the Presbytery of New Brunswick. These presbyteries later formed the Presbytery of New York.²⁵ In 1746, the Presbytery of New York formally left the Synod of Philadelphia and became the Synod of New York. Shortly after forming this presbytery, Craighead left due to their refusal to affirm the Solemn league and Covenant. As with all the previous splits, this too was a matter of politics, not theology. Craighead later formed and presided over the 'Craighead Society' of Covenanters in Middle Octorara.²⁶ In 1743, 'he gathered all of the Covenanters of Eastern Pennsylvania together and they renewed the Covenants'.²⁷

Covenanters in America

'Among immigrants to America the two largest dissenting Presbyterian bodies', according to William Fisk, 'were the Reformed Presbyterians, popularly styled Covenanters, and the Associate Synod who referred to themselves as Seceders'.²⁸ Scots-Irish immigrants formed the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania in the Colonies in 1753.²⁹ In addition, in 1774, a Reformed Presbytery was established near

²⁴ Charles Hodge, *The Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Part II. 1741-1788*, (Philadelphia: William S Martien, 1840), pp. 170-178 and Robert Ellis Thompson, *A History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States*, vol. VI of American Church History Series, (New York: The Christian Literature Company, 1895), p. 41.

²⁵ Hodge, *The Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 212.

²⁶ W. Melancthon Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America: with Sketches of all Her Ministry, Congregations, Missions, Institutions, Publication, Etc., and embellished with over fifty portraits and engravings* (Baltimore: Hill and Harvey Publishers, 1888), p. 62.

²⁷ Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America*, p. 467.

²⁸ William L. Fisk, 'The Seceders: The Scottish High Church Tradition in America' in *Journal of Presbyterian History* 62, no. 4 (Winter 1984), p. 291.

²⁹ Robert Lathan, *History of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South, to which is prefixed A History of the Associate Presbyterian Reformed Presbyterian Churches*, (Harrisburg, PA: Robert Lathan, 1882), pp. 141-143.

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. However, according to *The Centennial History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church*, the ‘causes which kept the Reformed and Associates separated in the old country lost their meaning in America’.³⁰ In 1782, the Associate Presbytery and the Reformed Presbytery united to form the Associate Reformed Synod, which included churches in Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio, North and South Carolina, and Georgia. Ministers later created the Associate Reformed Presbytery of the Carolinas and Georgia in 1790 at Long Cane, SC, but still within the Associate Reformed Synod.³¹ In 1798, Samuel B. Wylie and others formed the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America.³² These divisions and debates had significant effects on North Carolina and the expansion of covenanting thought. Although there were disagreements within the church, they found unity in one aspect – their adamant opposition regarding the establishment of a church governed by the state.

Magistracy in America

‘As a result of their experience in Ireland, the Presbyterians were bitterly hostile to the identification of church and state’.³³ One of the primary calls for revolution against the crown was the theocratic notion of having Jesus as the reigning king over the American Colonies as seen in a few sermons.³⁴ As seen previously, this was not a new idea or concept. Magistracy was primary for the Covenanters and later Reformed

³⁰ Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, *The Centennial History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1803-1903*, (Charleston, SC: Walker, Evans & Cogswell Co., 1905), p. 2.

³¹ *Centennial History of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church*, p. 2

³² Robert Emery, ‘Church and State in the Early Republic: The Covenanters’ Radical Critique’, *Journal of Law and Religion* 25, no. 2 (2009-2010), pp. 487-501; and Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America*, p. 78-79, 741.

³³ E.R.R. Green, ‘The Scotch-Irish and the Coming of the Revolution in North Carolina’ in *Irish Historical Journal* 7, no 26, (September 1950), p. 79 (pp. 77-86)

³⁴ Examples of these sermons found in Ellis Sandoz, *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era: 1730-1805*, 2 vols, (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1991).

Church. So much so, that the Reformed Presbytery in their republication of, *Act, Declaration and Testimony* challenged the readers in the introduction:

To let none mistake the presbytery's aim and intention, in the whole or any part of the following testimony, as if they minded nothing else but Magistracy, &c. or as if to have civil government and governors established, according to the rule of God's word, was all the religion they intended, without regarding or opposing any other of the prevailing evils and iniquities of the present time.³⁵

However, many of the radical Presbyterian ministers in the American colonies keenly promoted revolution through the elevation of Jesus as the supreme ruler over a nation. Just as the Scottish Covenanters held to the *Westminster Confession*, so too did the American Covenanters. One of the leading ministers of the New Side, was Gilbert Tennent. He preached a sermon named, *A Discourse Upon the Kingly-Office of Christ*. In this sermon, he further expanded magisterial ideals by declaring that:

The Kingdom of Christ is indeed twofold, viz. Either essential or personal. His essential Kingdom is that infinite Power of Government which belongs to him as God, and is common to all the Persons of the sacred Trinity. His mediatorial Kingdom is that Power of Government which was committed or delegated to Christ as Mediator, God-man, by his Father, as our Text confirms; and this is also twofold, either universal or particular. The universal mediatorial Kingdom of Christ extends to all Things, with a view to the Churches Good, Eph. 1.22. And gave him to be Head over all Things to the Church. The particular mediatorial Kingdom of Christ respects the Church only, and the compassing her Good in all the different Periods of Time, whither in this Life or that to come.³⁶

Other radical Presbyterians in Pennsylvania learned this understanding of magistracy and later used it for their advantage.

³⁵ Reformed Presbytery of North America, *Act, declaration, and testimony: for the whole of our Covenanted Reformation as attained to the established Britain and Ireland, particularly betwixt the years 1638 and 1649 inclusive, as also against all the steps of defection from said Reformation whether in former or later times, since the overthrow of that Glorious work, down to this present day*, (Philadelphia: Rue & Jones, 1876), p. vi.

³⁶ Gilbert Tennent, *A discourse upon Christ's kingly-office. Preached at Nottingham, in Pensilvania [sic], Sept. 24th 1740* (Boston: C. Harrison, 1741), p. 6.

Before progressing through the American interpretation of magistrate's authority in the American Colonies, it is important to note for a moment the place that the Bible had within the colonies. More than simply being in numerous homes, many held to the belief that the Bible was the authoritative revelation to humankind and provided the standards upon which all matters of life existed, whether personal, ecclesiastical, or civil. Mark Noll summarised it by writing that 'the elaborate covenantal system with its intricate interweaving of personal salvation, ecclesiastical structure, and political organization was, the Puritan felt, *merely the faithful exposition of the divine plan laid out in Scripture*'.³⁷ For many, the Bible served as the prominent source of determining the establishment and maintenance of governments. Beyond this, many used the Bible as a tool to justify revolution. Gordon Wood has written that, 'it was the clergy who made the Revolution meaningful for most common people'.³⁸ He later wrote 'for every gentleman who read a scholarly pamphlet and delved into Whig and ancient history for an explanation of events, there were dozens of ordinary people who read the Bible and looked to their ministers for an interpretation of what the Revolution meant'.³⁹ Coupled with this elevated view of Scripture, the view of society was equally elevated in the sight of many in the colonies. Perry Miller pointed out how the ministers in New England spoke 'in the name of the whole body' ... and 'encouraged a proliferation of the "federal theology" to a point where the individual's relation with God, his hope of salvation through a personal covenant, could be

³⁷ Noll, *Christians in the American Revolution*, p. 31. [italics mine]

³⁸ Gordon S. Wood, 'Religion and the American Revolution' in *New Directions in American Religious History*, eds. Harry S. Stout and D.G. Hart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 175. Also cited in James P. Byrd, *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War: The Bible and the American Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 2.

³⁹ Wood, 'Religion and the American Revolution', p. 2.

explicitly merged with the society's covenant'.⁴⁰ It was through this understanding of covenant theology, that one can grasp how the covenanting tradition was able to establish a headship and supremacy of Jesus Christ as king. Yet, this notion did not remain in New England. This was also prevalent throughout Pennsylvania, Virginia, and later into the backcountry of North Carolina through the preaching and writing of ministers such as Samuel Davies and Alexander Craighead.

Samuel Davies served as a Presbyterian minister in Virginia from 1746 until appointed president of the College of New Jersey in 1759 and served till his untimely death in 1761 at the age of 37.⁴¹ At one point between 1749-1755, Craighead served alongside Davies in Augusta County, Virginia. No specific evidence showed his joining Covenanter Societies; however, his relationships with Craighead and others of his kind, as well as his ideology as seen through his sermons, clearly demonstrated the influence of covenanting thought.

Davies was prolific in his preaching and writing, and as a result received a considerable amount of recognition. One of his more prominent sermons given in 1756 was *The Mediatorial Kingdoms and Glories of Jesus Christ*.⁴² He preached this sermon prior to the Seven Year's War, and in it, he strongly promoted the kingship of Jesus. Like Rutherford, Davies believed that Jesus was 'the supreme and universal Judge, to whom men and angels are accountable', and he considered Jesus as 'a great

⁴⁰ Perry Miller, 'From the Covenant to the Revival' in *The Shaping of American Religion*, eds. James Ward Smith and A Leland Jamison (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 325-326.

⁴¹ George William Pilcher, *Samuel Davies: Apostle of Dissent in Colonial Virginia*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978).

⁴² Samuel Davies, 'The Mediatorial Kingdom and Glories of Jesus Christ', in *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era: 1730-1805*, vol. 1, ed. Ellis Sandoz (2nd ed. Indianapolis, 1998).

king, invested with universal authority'.⁴³ Again, this seemed to exemplify a merging of the two kingdoms, and he too stepped into the realm of a quasi-theocracy, elevating the position of Jesus in both civil and ecclesiastical governments. After giving an exposition of the kingdom of Christ, Davies summarised it by saying:

Thus you see, my brethren, by these instances, selected out of many, that the kingly character and dominion of our Lord Jesus runs through the whole Bible. That of a king is his favourite character in which he glories, and which is the most expressive of his office. And this consideration alone may convince you that this character is of the greatest importance, and worthy of your most attentive regard.⁴⁴

The hearers, through poetic preaching like that of Davies, elevated the position of Jesus not just within their understanding of personal salvation, but also in matters of political or governmental organisation. Although this sermon was prior to the Seven Year's War, it established the fear of the state dictating or ruling over the church as the ideological groundwork before the American Revolution. Davies concluded his sermon, asserting that Christ's eternal kingdom ultimately reigned victorious over the temporal kingdom:

We have the strongest assurances that Jesus will yet take to him his great power, and reign in a more extensive and illustrious manner than he has ever yet done; and that the kingdoms of the earth shall yet become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.⁴⁵

Davies clearly made a definitive declaration of a covenanting political thought that magistrates and citizens ultimately served as one under the headship of Jesus Christ.

⁴³ 'The Mediatorial Kingdom', p. 186.

⁴⁴ 'The Mediatorial Kingdom', p. 190.

⁴⁵ 'The Mediatorial Kingdom', p. 205.

Puritan ministers in the Colonies often rejected the writings and ideas from Rutherford and other Covenanters during the early-colonial period.⁴⁶ However, the ideas of the Covenanters' political theology still proved to be fertile soil for some in the later-colonial period. Alexander Craighead, a New-Side Presbyterian, validated covenant vividly through his leadership in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina. The Synod of Philadelphia ordained him in 1736. According to William Henry Foote, 'during the interval from 1745 to 1753, he [Craighead] was for a time an associate with the Cameronians'.⁴⁷ He was a third-generation Presbyterian minister who in 1741, offered two sermons giving justification for a National Covenant and insight to his understanding of Christ's headship. Like Melville and Rutherford, Craighead provided in his *Discourse Concerning the Covenants* an example of mutual relationship of the two kingdoms where he pointed out the importance of the civil sword in helping to maintain religious and civil rights:

It's true indeed, that it's not only lawful, but also a Duty, to use the Power of the civil Sword, in Defence of our religious and civil Rights and Liberties: And there are some Errors, that, according unto the Word of God, fall under the Power of the civil Sword also; and what is a civil Power, ordained by God, for, but the Punishment of Wickedness, and the Encouragement of Piety.⁴⁸

This seemed to be a contradiction as prior to this Craighead asserted that, 'Christ's spiritual Kingdom is not carried on by the Power of the Sword, neither ought his

⁴⁶ One example is in Richard Mather's, *A reply to Mr. Rutherford, or, A defence of the answer to Reverend Mr. Herles booke against the independency of churches* (London: J. Rothwell and H. Allen, 1646), wherein such objections and answers as are returned to sundry passages in the said answer by Mr. Samuel Rutherford, a godly and learned brother of the Church of Scotland, in his booke entituled *The due right of presbyters, are examined and removed, and the answer justified and cleared* (London: J. Rothwell and H. Allen, 1646).

⁴⁷ William Henry Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina, historical and biographical. Illustrative of the principles of a portion of her early settlers* (New York: Robert Carter, 1846), p. 184.

⁴⁸ Alexander Craighead, *A Discourse Concerning the Covenants: Containing the Substance of Two Sermons, Preached at Middle-Octorara, January 10 and 17, 1741, 2. Upon Joshua IX. 15.* (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1742), pp. 18-19. [Afterwards referred to as *A Discourse Concerning the Covenants*]

Subjects to make use of a common Sword, in the Propagation of their spiritual Warfare'.⁴⁹

Just as Rutherford determined the distinction between the office of king and the person, Craighead also agreed that the law preceded the king. 'Jesus Christ is the alone King, Head, and Lawgiver of his Church', Craighead asserted 'which is his peculiar, spiritual, and free Kingdom, so as none have Authority and Right to give Laws and Ordinances to his Church, as such, but himself only'.⁵⁰ In many ways, Craighead was in line with the previous covenanting tradition. However, Craighead further blurred the lines between the two kingdoms as seen in his later *Renewal of the Covenants*, published in 1743. Craighead led the farmers in the backcountry of Pennsylvania to renew this covenant and declare:

And our drawing of the Sword, is to testify to the World; that we are one in Judgment with them, and that we are to this Day willing to maintain the same defensive War in defending our Religion and ourselves against all Opposers thereof, although the Defence of these should cost us our Lives, or any Thing that is most dear to us.⁵¹

In this action and declaration, Craighead provided a justification or cause for violent rebellion rather than a passive resistance as advocated by Knox and Melville. This was where he fell more in line with Rutherford and Shields. However, these sermons and pamphlets caused trouble for Craighead with the civil authorities and other

⁴⁹ *A Discourse Concerning the Covenants*, p. 18.

⁵⁰ Alexander Craighead, *Renewal of the Covenants, National and Solemn League; A Confession of Sins; and Engagement to Duties; and a testimony; As they were carried on at Middle Octorara in Pennsylvania, November 11, 1743. Together with an introductory preface* (Philadelphia: B. Franklin 1743, 1748), pp. xxxvii-xxxviii. [Afterwards referred to as *Renewal of the Covenants*]

⁵¹ *Renewal of the Covenants*, p. xxxii.

ministers in Pennsylvania, who declared him, and a pamphlet published in May 1743 as ‘full of treason, sedition, and distraction’.⁵²

Craighead, in response became ‘silent’ until 1749. During these silent years, Craighead, according to William Glasgow, formed the ‘Craighead Society’ and maintained Covenanter principles. During this time, ‘after co-operating with the Covenanters for several years, and failing to obtain help for them from the mother country, he abandoned the society, returned to the Presbyterian Church, and removed to North Carolina’.⁵³ In 1750, along with several other families that left Pennsylvania, Craighead moved south along the Great Wagon Road into Virginia and joined with a fellow minister appointed to a church there, Samuel Davies. Although he rejoined the Presbyterian Church, Craighead still maintained his Covenanter ideals. In August 1751, the Associate Synod in Scotland received a letter from Alexander Craighead ‘beseeching that the Synod would appoint some ministers to labour in that part of America’.⁵⁴ Also, evident in June 1752, a resident in Augusta County, Virginia charged a complaint against him because he ‘taught and maintained treasonable position, and preached and published pernicious Doctrines in the County of Augusta, and that Richard Woods one of the Magistrates of the said County administered the Oaths of Allegiance to the said Creaghead, and allowed him to omit what part of them he thought fit’.⁵⁵ After serving in Virginia for a time, Craighead moved on to

⁵² *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod, 1706-1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1904), p 165.

⁵³ Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America*, pp. 62-63.

⁵⁴ John McKerrow, *History of the Secession Church*, (Edinburgh: William Oliphant and Son, 1839), pp. 333-335.

⁵⁵ *Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia*, vol V (November 1, 1739-May 7, 1754, ed. Wilmer L. Hall, (Richmond: Commonwealth of Virginia Division of Purchase and Printing, 1945), pp. 398-400.

Mecklenburg County, North Carolina and installed as the first pastor in this region. He later promoted the founding of a few Presbyterian churches in Mecklenburg and neighbouring Rowan County.⁵⁶ It was through these churches that the later call for revolt against Great Britain became the loudest in the southern colonies, as many of Scots-Irish in Mecklenburg and Rowan Counties came from Pennsylvania. These Covenanters previously made oaths and called for a *Renewal of the Covenants* determining a justification for resistance against the crown when it failed to maintain the covenant and prevent tyranny against Presbyterians.

Although this has been a broad examination tracing the evolution and diffusion of the covenanting political thought concerning the authority of magistracy, it demonstrates the foundation and initial structure for the American Covenanters' political theology. It was clear that the Covenanters' political theology had a direct and important effect on the American colonies leading up to and during the American Revolution. Some historians defined the conflict of the American Revolution as a predominantly 'secular' event. Yet, by examining the Covenanters' interpretation, seeing the American Revolution as a war of religion, or in some cases a 'Presbyterian Rebellion' is not without merit.⁵⁷ As a result of the Covenanters' understanding of resistance, ministers, like Craighead, Davies, and others examined later in this thesis, used their voices for political means and later called for outright revolt against the 'tyranny' of Great Britain in matters of both civil and religious liberty.

⁵⁶ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, pp. 184-190.

⁵⁷ James H. Smylie, 'Presbyterians and the American Revolution: A Documentary Account', *The Journal of Presbyterian History* vol. 52, no 4 (Winter 1974), p. 303; Richard Gardiner, 'The Presbyterian Rebellion: An Analysis of the perception that the American Revolution was a Presbyterian War' (unpublished PhD Thesis, Marquette University, 2005); and Richard Gardiner, 'The Presbyterian Rebellion?' in *Journal of the American Revolution*, (5 September 2013), <http://allthingsliberty.com/2013/09/presbyterian-rebellion/>. [Accessed 2 June 2014]

Chapter 4 – Insurgency

Resistance Exemplified in America

According to Mark Noll, the understanding of how ministers preached salvation evolved through the late-colonial period to a point where, ‘they focused on God's role in conversion yet brought about an exaltation of human activity in the process of salvation’.¹ This exultation of human activity prompted the pastors and ministers to appeal for their members to join the later cause for independence, which they believed was as a call for ‘salvation’ for the colony and later the nation. There is no way one can ascertain a specific time or place when the notion for independence became a cause that the ministers joined or rallied. This was an evolving interpretation or belief. Certainly, conflict existed within these various interpretations, as ministers argued whether it was ultimately God who brought about the results of the conflict. One catalyst for the evolving interpretation came with the immigrants from Scotland and Ulster who brought covenanting ideas with them to North Carolina. These ideas promoted escalating calls for resistance in the American Colonies and infused the political culture of this region.

The definition of covenant as articulated in the American colonies further recognised the conditional nature of the covenant and promoted the contractual view, thus authorising the belief of resistance as promoted in Scotland. For example, Alexander Craighead when calling for a renewal of the National Covenant in Pennsylvania

¹ Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 13.

asserted that the covenant served also as a contract. However, he took it a step further than Rutherford and agreed with James Stewart and avowed that a covenant with God was perpetual, while covenants with nations are not perpetual, as nations rise and fall.² In *Naphtali*, Stewart regarded the Solemn League and Covenant affirmed by the government as ‘a perpetual law: and this Covenant which from the beginning was and is the most firm and Indispensible (*sic*) Oath of God, becamse (*sic*) at length the very Fundamental Law of the Kingdom’.³ Furthermore, he claimed that both covenants ‘are in Themselves Holly (*sic*), Just, and True, and perpetually Binding... which no Authority nor Power of Man, is or ever shall be able to disannul’.⁴ Ian Smart summarised it best when he wrote that ‘those who held to the Covenants of 1638 and 1643 considered them perpetually binding to all Scots even those who had not actually signed them, and *even all future generations*.’⁵ In the same fashion as Cameron, Craighead declared:

We do likewise enter our Testimony against *George* the I. his having any legal Right to rule over this Realm, because he being an outlandish *Lutherian*; and likewise against *George* the II. for their being sworn Prelaticks, the Head of Malignants, and Protectors of Sectarian Hereticks, and Electory Princes of *Brunswick*, in choosing of new Emperors, which is their giving their Power to the Beast; and for their Confederacy with Popish Princes, directly contrary to the second Commandment; and for want of their Scriptural and national Qualifications, as is above said; and for their

² Alexander Craighead, *Renewal of the Covenants, National and Solemn League; A Confession of Sins; and Engagement to Duties; and a Testimony; as they were carried on at Middle Octorara in Penfylvania, November 11, 1743*, (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1743), pp. xxii-xxiii. [Afterwards referred to as *Renewal of the Covenants*]

³ James Stewart, *Naphtali, or, The wrestlings of the Church of Scotland for the kingdom of Christ contained in a true and short deduction thereof, from the beginning of the reformation of religion, until the year 1667 : together with the last speeches and testimonies of some who have died for the truth since the year 1660* (Edinburgh: s.n., 1667), p. 73. [Afterwards referred to as *Naphtali*]

⁴ *Naphtali*, p. 224.

⁵ Ian Michael Smart, ‘The Political Ideas of the Scottish Covenanters, 1638-1688’ in *History of Political Thought*, vol. 1, no. 2 (June 1980), pp. 183. [Italics mine]; also see E. Calvin Beisner, ‘His Majesty’s Advocate: Sir James Stewart of Goodtrees (1635-1713) and Covenanter Resistance Theory Under the Restoration Monarchy’, (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of St Andrews, 2002), pp. 88 & 123.

being established Head of the Church by the Laws of *England*.^{10thly}, We likewise state our Testimony *against all that shall succeed* them under these Limitations to the Crown.⁶

Due to the conditional interpretation of covenant, this further reinforced anti-papery and anti-monarchism throughout the American Colonies.

Craighead's *Renewal of the Covenants* provided evidence concerning this sense of 'anti-papery' within the covenanting tradition in the American Colonies, where he declared:

We look upon it as our Duty, to endeavour the advancing and promoting the Power of this true reformed Religion against all Ungodliness and Profanity, and the securing and preserving the purity thereof, **against** all Kind of Errors, Heresies, and Schism, as namely, *Independency, Libertinism, Anabaptism, Antinomianism, Arminianism, Socinianism, Quakerism, Erastianism, Deism, Moravianism*, and that awful Error of pretending to live without Sin, and yet being notoriously wicked, and that abominable *Catholicism*, to wit, our former mongrel Church Communion.⁷

J.C.D. Clark in asking whether the American Revolution was a war of religion asserted the 'fear of papery' prompted a considerable number throughout New England and the southern colonies to join in the revolution against the 'scenario of impending tyranny'.⁸ From this so-called 'impending tyranny', covenanting thought evolved beyond the opposition to the Pope and other forms of theology with which they disagreed, and moved towards a tradition which warranted ideas of resistance against what they deemed tyrannical monarchy as the basis of a conditional covenant. Scottish covenanting thought stressed violence as a legitimate means to resist tyranny.

⁶ *Renewal of the Covenants*, p. 33.

⁷ *Renewal of the Covenants*, p. 68. [Emphasis mine]

⁸ Jonathan Clark, 'The American Revolution: A War of Religion?' in *History Today* 39, no 12 (December 1989), para. 20 and 23. He also further explored this notion in part four of J.C.D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660-1832: Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 296-381.

The interpretation of ideas established certain aspects of the Covenanters' political theology. This justification later became a deliberate call for resistance against the crown throughout the southern colonies with a focus on North Carolina. It must consider how theologically sanctioned violence was a potent method for promoting active resistance, first in Pennsylvania and later in the backcountry of North Carolina.

'Resistance to Tyranny is Obedience to God'

Perry Miller once noted that 'though by now the Revolution has been voluminously, and one might suppose exhaustively, studied, we still do not realize how effective were generations of Protestant preaching in evoking patriotic enthusiasm'.⁹ Just as Scotland was compared to Zion by its radical ministers, so too were the American Colonies. Ministers used the term 'Zion' for centuries as a type or representation of a chosen people or nation. When calling for battle in the American colonies, like Scotland, the pastors made a correlation between Israel or Zion and the colonies in order to justify biblically-sanctioned violence. As James Byrd wrote, 'Americans have cited scripture to *justify violence*, praise heroes, vilify enemies, celebrate victories, and rationalize defeats. Americans often think of the United States as "*God's New Israel*", a blessed nation on a divine mission, its wars blessed by God'.¹⁰ Within the American colonies, ministers waved the banner of violence, and one such prominent minister was Samuel Davies.

⁹ Perry Miller, 'From the Covenant to the Revival' in *The Shaping of American Religion*, eds. James Ward Smith and A Leland Jamison (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), p. 333.

¹⁰ James P. Byrd, *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War: The Bible and the American Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 1-2. [*italics mine*]

In a sermon named, 'Religion and Patriotism, the constituents of a Good Soldier' preached in 1755, Davies used the passage of Scripture, 2 Samuel 10:12, which reads, 'Be of good courage and let us be courageous for our people, and for the cities of our God, and may the LORD do what seems good to him'. In this sermon, Davies subtly lifted this passage out of the greater context of the entire chapter based on King David and the Israelites defeating the Ammonites and Syrians. In so doing, he promoted the notion of America as the new 'Zion'. Davies also persuaded his parishioners that the Native Americans and the French were 'dastardly, insidious Barbarians' who 'have exercised on some of them the most unnatural and leisurely Tourtures; ... sure these are not Men; they are not beast of Prey; they are some worse; they must be infernal Furies in human shape'.¹¹ He went on to plead:

Shall Virginia incur the guilt, and the everlasting shame of tamely exchanging her Liberty, her Religion, and her All for the arbitrary Gallic Power, and for Popish Slavery, Tyranny, and Massacre? Alas! Are there none of her children, that enjoyed all the Blessings of her Peace, that will espouse her Cause, and befriend her not in the Time of her Danger?¹²

This interpretation coincided with Rutherford's *Free Disputation* that if the so-called savages waged war, then this justified war. Consequently, instead of violence being for the purpose of propagating the gospel, it became the justification for resisting their popish tyranny. Therefore, the call for just violence against the Native Americans and the French was a defence of God's chosen people and became justification for resistance against the tyranny of the British monarchy. Ruth Bloch pointed out that 'by the mid-1770s, then, religion was so deeply intertwined with revolutionary political ideology that it seems virtually impossible to distinguish between them', and

¹¹ Samuel Davies, *Religion and Patriotism: The Constituents of a Good Soldier. A Sermon preached to Captain Overton's Independent Company of Volunteers, raised in Hanover County, Virginia, August 17, 1755* (Philadelphia/London: J. Buckland, 1756), pp. 2-4.

¹² Davies, *Religion and Patriotism*, p. 4.

one example given was the battle cry in Pennsylvania... “No King but King Jesus!”¹³

From this intertwined ideology, the radical Presbyterians in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and North Carolina later justified resistance against the tyranny of the monarchy.

Likewise, in *A Discourse Concerning the Covenants*, the New-Side minister

Craighead redefined tyranny, where he declared:

There is no Power or Authority in itself, but what is of God, and ordained by God; and thus, we must distinguish between Power and Authority in themselves, and the Execution of Power and Authority by Man. The former is an Ordinance, of God's own Institution, appointed for the Punishment of all Impiety, and for the Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and the better Regulation of the World: Whereas the latter, to wit, the Exercising of Power and Authority, as many cruel Tyrants have done, suppressing the Cause of God, ... I say, to imagine that such an Exercise of Power and Authority is allowed and approved of God, is as gross an Absurdity as almost can be supposed. ... But the wrong Exercise of Power and Authority, to wit, the Using of them contrary unto the Word of God, ought to be resisted, as is plain from the forecited Text, We ought to obey God rather than Man; and hence we may observe, that the Subjection which we truly do owe to those in Places of Power and Trust, is only in the Lord.¹⁴

Craighead similarly expressed the view that if the king exercised his authority for anything contrary to the cause of God, this demanded resistance. By broadening the terms of resistance to tyranny, this opened the door for revolution. Naturally, the Old Side Presbyterians responded to this by asserting this declaration as seditious and treasonous:

The above mentioned paper, with an affidavit concerning it, being read in open Synod, it was unanimously agreed: That it is full of treason, sedition, and distraction, and grievous perverting of the sacred oracles to the ruin of all societies and civil

¹³ Ruth Bloch, ‘Religion and Ideological Change in the American Revolution’ in *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s*, 2nd edition, eds. Mark A. Noll and Luke E. Harlow (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 53.

¹⁴ Alexander Craighead, *A Discourse Concerning the Covenants: Containing the Substance of Two Sermons, preached at Middle-Octorara, January 10 and 17, 1741,2. Upon Joshua IX. 15.* (Philadelphia: B. Franklin, 1742), p. 17.

government, and directly and diametrically opposite to our religious principles, as we have on all occasions openly and publicly declared to the world; and we hereby unanimously, with the greatest sincerity, declare that we detest this paper, and with it all principles and practices that tend to destroy the civil or religious rights of mankind, or to foment or encourage sedition or dissatisfaction with the civil government that we are now under, or rebellion, treason, or any thing that is disloyal.¹⁵

Regardless of their disagreement over the manner they governed, the voices of the New Side grew louder, and this dissension later promoted revolution. The mood for resistance against tyranny began to grow in the 1740s among the Covenanters in Pennsylvania and continued in the North Carolina backcountry in the 1760s through the 1770s as exemplified in the Regulator Movement.

North Carolina Backcountry

The North Carolina backcountry during the time leading up to and during the War of Regulation was a unique region within the province. This uniqueness happened within enormous diversity of culture and religion. Many who migrated from Pennsylvania were English, Scottish, Scots-Irish, and German. They had diverse religious backgrounds as some were Presbyterian, Moravian, Quaker, Baptist, and even a small scant of Methodists. All of them converging in a place of growth and opportunity for land, farming, and commerce. Through this diversity, they later shared a common grievance with the undue taxation, which prompted unity.

The story of the North Carolina backcountry is unique and starts at the time of the restoration of Charles II as king in 1660. In 1663 and 1665, as a token of his gratitude

¹⁵ *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod, 1706-1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1904), p 165.

to eight men who remained loyal to him and in some way aided in his restoration as king, he awarded joint ownership of 'Carolina'. They held the extensive rights to this region. However, they had great difficulty in maintaining settlers. By 1712, Carolina was separated into North Carolina and South Carolina. This failed to cure the difficulties, and in 1719, South Carolina was established as a royal colony. Ten years later, in 1729, King George II purchased the rights from seven descendants of the eight Lords Proprietors. As such, in 1729, North Carolina became a royal colony.¹⁶ The lone holdout was John Carteret, 2nd Earl of Granville, grandson of the Lord Proprietor, George Carteret. As such, he inherited a sizable portion of land throughout North Carolina. This area became known as the 'Granville District' and spanned south from the Virginia-North Carolina border approximately 65 miles. The exact description established that 'the southern border of Carteret's land would be at thirty-five degrees and thirty-four minutes north latitude, with the north line the Virginia-North Carolina border'.¹⁷ This area included all of Rowan County and the southern line of the district was the northern border of Mecklenburg County.

Shortly after the establishment of North Carolina, the royal governors began granting large tracts of land to spectators throughout the colony. In 1748, Lord Granville began granting land. When Carteret died, the land agents granted additional lands, collected rents, and surveyed for the new incoming settlers from Pennsylvania. The largest tract

¹⁶ Carole Watterson Troxler, *Farming Dissenters: The Regulator Movement in Piedmont North Carolina* (Raleigh: Office of Archives and History, 2011), pp. 1-2; A. Roger Ekirch, *'Poor Carolina': Politics and Society in colonial North Carolina, 1729-1776* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1981), chapter 3;

¹⁷ Thornton W. Mitchell, 'The Granville District and Its Land Records' in *The North Carolina Historical Review* 70, no 2 (April 1993), p. 104.

of land granted from this district was to a Moravian colony led by Bishop August Spangenberg, which was 98,985 acres and later named Wachovia.¹⁸

As noted previously, the backcountry served as a haven for settlers from various backgrounds, whether by ethnicity, nationality, or religion. The German settlers were predominantly Lutheran or Reformed Calvinists, but some were of a small group known as Moravians. Others throughout the piedmont were Quakers and Baptists who tended to settle near the Sandy Creek region. But, the largest religious group in the backcountry were Presbyterians. Each of these groups found the backcountry in North Carolina to be ideal as this region was without Anglican oversight, and they were able to worship freely.

In North Carolina, one historian regarded the magistracy as poorly established.¹⁹ However, it was not necessarily poorly established as one sect and a few close-knit families predominantly led it. According to Charles Woodmason, Presbyterians made up most of the magistracy in the backcountry of North Carolina. Woodmason further noted in his diary that when he attempted to preach against the wishes of the Presbyterians, he believed it ‘vain’ to obtain help from the magistracy ‘as all the magistrates are Presbyterians, I could not get a warrant—if I got Warrants, as the Constables are Presbyterians likewise, I could not get them serv’d’.²⁰ Fischer described the North Carolina backcountry as being similarly established as the clans

¹⁸ *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, vol. I: 1752-1771, ed. Adelaide L. Fries, (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Print Co., 1922), p. 65-69.

¹⁹ Troxler, *Farming Dissenters*, pp. 10-12.

²⁰ Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant*, Richard J. Hooker, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), p. 51.

in the Scottish borders. He described the backcountry as ‘a group of related families who lived near to one another, were conscious of a common identity, carried the same surname, claimed descent from common ancestors, and banded together when danger threatened’.²¹

The Regulator Movement

The Regulator Movement or the War of Regulation serves as one of the best examples of violence justified in America.²² Carole Troxler began her book writing that the Regulator Movement started well before given the name. She noted that ‘the uncertainty concerning land ownership was embedded in the colony’s original proprietary status and the resumption of royal control in 1729’.²³ This uncertainty later prompted skirmishes throughout the backcountry. One such skirmish occurred in Mecklenburg County known as the ‘Sugar Creek War’.

The Sugar Creek War was certainly not a war, but a riot between Thomas Polk along with several other settlers in between Sugar Creek and Reedy Creek against Henry Eustace McCulloh.²⁴ Shortly afterwards, McCulloh was very upset and penned a letter

²¹ David Hackett Fischer, *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 663. For a detailed summary of the American backcountry during this period, see pp. 633-651. Likewise, to know more about the interconnections of the Mecklenburg families, see pp. 664-668.

²² Note that before the Regulator Movement, there has been a long-standing history of rebellion in the North Carolina province. The first rebellion in the American colonies happened in 1676-1678, known as Culpeper’s Rebellion. For more information regarding this, please see Chapter 3 of Noeleen McIlvenna, *A Very Mutinous People: The Struggle for North Carolina, 1660-1713* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009), pp. 46-70 and Hugh F. Rankin, *Upheaval in Albemarle, the Story of Culpeper’s Rebellion, 1675-1689* (Raleigh: The Carolina Charter Tercentenary Commission, 1962).

²³ Troxler, *Farming Dissenters*, p. 1.

²⁴ For further details regarding Thomas Polk and the influence and interconnections of the Mecklenburg Polks, see Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, pp. 644-650.

to Edmund Fanning about the extremely dangerous ordeal.²⁵ McCulloh later detailed the events from April and May of 1765, in a deposition to Lieutenant Governor William Tryon. In April 1765, Tryon sent a letter to McCulloh advising him to:

desist from any Steps in Law to dispossess these people, 'till we meet at the General Assembly to be held at Newbern the 2nd day of May next where I expect to see you; at which time I hope such Measures may be mediated, as will tend to the quieting the Minds of the Inhabitants, and securing the Peace of His Majesty's Province, without injury to the Proprietor of the said Land.²⁶

However, McCulloh failed to heed this warning and sought to complete the task of surveying the land and obtaining the monies owed to him by anyone who settled the land. He met with four representatives, which included the obstinate Polk. According to McCulloh, they reached an agreement previously for the land and permitted the lands to be surveyed. However, when McCulloh arrived to 'lay off the lands', a large cohort of 143 men welcomed him to renegotiate the terms of their previous arrangement. For fear of his life, McCulloh agreed to consider their requests and to wait before beginning to survey the land. He later rejected the terms dictated to him by Polk and fled. McCulloh beseeched Tryon to make 'examples of some of the Ringleaders' by removing them from his land.²⁷ According to Charles Sellers, McCulloh later helped Grenville's government with plans for a stamp act.²⁸ Shortly after this scuffle, other frays occurred throughout the backcountry. Thornton Mitchell

²⁵ 'Henry Eustace McCulloh to Edmund Fanning, 9th May 1765', in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. VII, ed. William L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1890), pp. 32-34.

²⁶ 'Councils Journals' (Minutes of the North Carolina Governor's Council, 7 May – 9 May 1765), in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. VII, ed. William L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1890), p. 12.

²⁷ 'Councils Journals', pp. 10-31.

²⁸ Charles G. Sellers, Jr. 'Private Profits and British Colonial Policy: The Speculations of Henry McCulloh' in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (October 1951), pp. 549-550.

noted that ‘Herman Husband suggested that the inability to acquire land was one of the reasons for the conflicts that developed in 1770’.²⁹

Rightfully, some historians have considered the Regulator Movement a social or cultural event in response to the insecurity in the backcountry.³⁰ Troxler wrote that ‘some of the crucial Regulator stirrings originated within religious gatherings’, and she further noted that the ‘styles and expressions of the emerging religious culture of the upland South, as well as its democratic tendencies and emphasis on individual value and responsibility, made North Carolina’s Regulator Movement distinctive’.³¹ During the early-Colonial period, North Carolina became an oasis for dissenters. Broadly speaking, some considered the Protestants throughout Great Britain and the colonies who did not align with the Church of England as dissenters or non-conformists. In North Carolina, many associated Presbyterians with other dissenting groups, such as Baptists, Methodists, and Quakers.³² For example, James Reed, in a letter written to the secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, described the dissenters in North Carolina: ‘The Baptists are obstinate, illiterate, and grossly ignorant, the Methodists, ignorant, censorious, and uncharitable, the Quakers, Rigid, but the Presbyterians are pretty moderate except here and there a Bigot or rigid Calvinist’.³³ North Carolina, like Pennsylvania and Rhode Island welcomed various

²⁹ Mitchell, ‘The Granville District and Its Land Records’, p. 117.

³⁰ Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, pp. 650-651, see footnote 3 on page 651.

³¹ Troxler, *Farming Dissenters*, p. xii.

³² Donald G. Mathews, ‘“Christianizing the South”: Sketching a Synthesis’ in *New Directions in American Religious History*, eds. Harry S. Stout and Daryl G. Hart (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 84-115 and Jewel L. Spangler, ‘Protestant Dissenters in the Early South’ in *The Journal of Southern Religion* 14 (2012), <http://jsr.fsu.edu/issues/vol14/spangler.html>.

³³ ‘Letter from James Reed to Philip Bearcroft, June 26, 1760’ in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. VI, ed. Williams L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Joseph Daniels, 1886), p. 265.

religious groups. For example, in the late seventeenth century, North Carolina's colonial governor was a Quaker – John Archdale.³⁴

Primarily, the Regulation Movement was an economic and political insurrection by the rural farmers in the backcountry of North Carolina, in the counties of Anson, Orange, Granville, and Mecklenburg. The main intention of the Regulators was to 'regulate' the way they were being treated by the government and to promote reform for the fair taxation of their land.³⁵ The purported ringleader for the Regulators was Herman Husband.³⁶ He was born and raised in Cecil County, Maryland. He once heard George Whitefield preach, and as a result joined the Presbyterian Church.³⁷ It was not until later that he converted to the Society of Friends.³⁸ He was a savvy businessman who increased his position throughout the Old North State. It was through his upbringing and by his position that enabled him to promote resistance to others in the backcountry. However, he never actually participated in the conflict against the crown due to his Quaker pacifism. When the moment arrived to fight Governor Tryon and his soldiers, he fled the battlefield.³⁹ His plantation was later

³⁴ John Archdale, *The case of Protestant dissenters in Carolina, shewing how a law to prevent occasional conformity there, has ended in the total subversion of the constitution in church and state: Recommended to the serious consideration of all that are true friends to our present establishment* (London: s.n., 1706); Henry G. Hood, *The Public Career of John Archdale: 1642-1717* (Greensboro, NC: NC Friend Historical Society, 1976).

³⁵ Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

³⁶ Also known as Hermon Husband, see A. Roger Ekirch, "'A New Government of Liberty': Hermon Husband's Vision of Backcountry North Carolina, 1755", in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 34, no. 4, (October 1977), pp. 632-646.

³⁷ Hermon Husband, 'Some Remarks on Religion, with the Author's Experience in Pursuit thereof. For the Consideration of all People; Being the real Truth of what happened. Simply Delivered, without the Help of School-Words, or Dress of Learning', in *Some Eighteenth-Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina*, William K. Boyd, ed., (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Company, 1927), pp. 211-226.

³⁸ Husband, 'Some Remarks on Religion', pp. 227-246.

³⁹ Troxler, *Farming Dissenters*, pp. 42-47, 108.

seized and ransacked by Tryon's forces.⁴⁰ According to William K. Boyd's summary of Husband, 'he was outlawed by Governor Tryon and a price being on his head, he fled to Pennsylvania'.⁴¹ While in Pennsylvania, Husband participated in the Whiskey Rebellion and was sentenced to death, but later pardoned by President Washington.⁴² Husband, in his retelling of the Regulator Movement, asserted that it was 'not our Form or Mode of Government, not yet the Body of our Laws that we are quarreling with, but with the Malpractices of the Officers of our County Court, and the Abuses that we suffer by those that are impowered (*sic*) to manage our publick'.⁴³ His motivation along with some of the other Regulators was not one of religion but of economy.

Secondarily, historians have traditionally overlooked the religious aspect of this rebellion. However, some recent historians have changed this. For example, Marjoleine Kars devoted a few chapters of her work, *Breaking Loose Together* on the role religion played for the Regulators, yet she gave little attention specifically to the Presbyterians and their involvement.⁴⁴ However, E.R.R. Green has noted conversely that:

It is impossible to determine the part played in the back-country uprising known as the Regulation by Scotch-Irish or dissenters, for the struggle was one of a section and even of a class against maladministration. In fact, the part played by the Presbyterian

⁴⁰ MS, 'Journal of the Expedition against the Insurgents in the Western Frontiers of North Carolina begun the 20th April 1771', War of Regulation Papers, Box 3 (WREG), Folder 4, State Archives of North Carolina.

⁴¹ William K. Boyd, ed., *Some Eighteenth-Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina*, (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Company, 1927), p. 195.

⁴² Boyd, *Some Eighteenth-Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina*, p. 195.

⁴³ Hermon Husband, 'An Impartial Relation of the First Rise and Cause of the Recent Differences, in Publick Affairs, In the Province of North Carolina; and of the past Tumults and Riots that lately happened in that Province', in William K. Boyd, ed., *Some Eighteenth-Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina*, (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Company, 1927), p. 254.

⁴⁴ Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, specifically chapters 4-6.

ministers in seeking to restrain the Regulators shows that the radicalism of the former was mainly religious in origin and neither political or social.⁴⁵

Although the Regulators' cause was primarily economic, many farmers pursued justification for their actions in religious terms showing how the unequal and unjust taxation was an act of tyranny on the part of the king and his magistrates.

Woodmason wrote of the backcountry Regulators 'in whom the Republican spirit of 41 yet dwells, and who would very willingly put the Solemn League and Covenant now in force—Nay, their teachers press it on them, and say that [it] is as binding on the Consciences of all the Kirk, as the Gospel it Self, for it is a Covenant enter'd into with God, from which they cannot recede'.⁴⁶ The parishioners' cause strongly resembled the interpretations made by Rutherford and Cameron when they made the distinction between the officers of king and the king himself as seen above. Through this, the Regulators echoed the covenanting tradition and declared their resistance justified against the tyrant king. In doing so, they were able to recruit others for their cause.

The backcountry provided a simpler life for these dissenting groups without the burden of government, and through this the ideology of the covenanting thought was able to thrive. Ministers taught and trained by Craighead and Davies led several Presbyterian Churches throughout the region of the Regulators, all of whom held to the covenanting tradition. Implicitly, the parishioners were well versed in understanding the covenant and the role government played in it. As a result, a number of the parishioners from these churches participated in the Regulator

⁴⁵ E.R.R. Green, 'The Scotch-Irish and the Coming of the Revolution in North Carolina' in the *Irish Historical Journal* 7, no 26, (September 1950), p. 80.

⁴⁶ Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution*, pp. 138-139.

Movement. Alice Baldwin summarised how the ‘independent frontiersmen’ ‘had deep convictions of the sacredness of covenants, of their right to hold the governor and sovereign to strict account, and to forswear all allegiance to those who violated their rights and liberty’.⁴⁷

Just as the political theology, the interpretation of covenant, and the definition of tyranny evolved, so too did the Regulators’ methods and perspective. They initially started as a passive resistance group through protests, pamphlets, and not paying their appointed taxes, but this evolved and turned to active rebellion. As shown previously, within covenanting thought, violence ought to be avoided, but became necessary if the tyrant king broke the covenant and violated his duties as protecting his subjects. Out of this political theology, some of the Regulators moved from passive resistance to active and violent resistance, which climaxed in the battle of Alamance. Ideology became reality, and this demanded action for the radical Presbyterians.

Of the Regulators, some were from the region in western North Carolina which had a few Presbyterian churches led by men such as Hugh McAden, Henry Pattillo, and David Caldwell, all of whom were directly connected to Craighead and Davies and require introduction. Like Craighead, Hugh McAden was a New Side Presbyterian. He studied at the College of New Jersey, graduating in 1753. Licensed and commissioned by the New Castle Presbytery in 1755, he took an eleven-month journey from Pennsylvania into the backcountry of North Carolina. After returning from this missionary journey, the Presbyterian Church ordained him in 1757 and

⁴⁷ Alice M. Baldwin, ‘Sowers of Sedition: The Political Theories of Some of the New Light Presbyterian Clergy of Virginia and North Carolina’ in *The William & Mary Quarterly* 5, no 1 (January 1948), p. 71.

commissioned him to return to North Carolina. In 1759, he joined the newly formed Hanover Presbytery, led by Davies and Craighead. Nine years later, he played a vital role in the installation of David Caldwell as the pastor over the churches in Buffalo and Alamance. He later became one of the original members of the Orange Presbytery and played a vital role with other Presbyterian ministers during the Regulator Movement. He died in January 1781. Two weeks after his death, General Cornwallis's army encamped around his home and destroyed his papers leaving us with little of his records to fully research. Much that we know of him outside of his journal was through letters and biographies written of him.⁴⁸

Scottish by birth, Henry Pattillo moved with his family to Virginia. He lived with Samuel Davies for seven years and studied under him. In 1758, although not completing his formal education, the Presbyterian Church licensed him for ministry and later ordained him. He joined with McAden, Caldwell, and others to form the Orange Presbytery. Although he was initially loyal to the British Crown, he later became an ardent supporter of revolution and independence. He died in 1801 at the age of seventy-five.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ For more on Hugh McAden, please see William Henry Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina, historical and biographical. Illustrative of the principles of a portion of her settlers*. (New York: Robert Carter, 1846), pp. 158-190; Lila McGeachy Ray, 'Alexander Craighead: with drawn Sword' (Master's thesis, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, 2001); Charles A. Hanna, *The Scotch-Irish of the Scot in North Britain, North Ireland, and North America*, vol. II (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1902); and Walter W. Moore, 'Beginnings and Development of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina' in *Appreciations and Historical Addresses* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1914), pp. 131-140.

⁴⁹ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, pp. 213-224; Durward T. Stokes 'Henry Pattillo in North Carolina' his *North Carolina Historical Review* 44 (1967), pp. 373-391; and Walter W. Moore, 'Beginnings and Development of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina', in *Appreciations and Historical Addresses* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1914), pp. 147-149.

David Caldwell was one of the more prominent characters in North Carolina during this time as a minister, educator, and politician. Like the others, he was a Presbyterian minister. He graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1761 under the leadership of Samuel Davies, licensed in 1763, and ordained in 1765. In the same year, he took a commission to the backcountry of North Carolina. In 1766, he married Rachel Craighead, daughter of Alexander Craighead. Recognising the importance and need of higher education in North Carolina, around 1767, he established a school for classical learning later known as Log College. He was initially a supporter of the Crown, but after the Regulator Movement, his loyalties shifted to the American cause for independence. He declined the offer to become the first president of the University of North Carolina and continued his ministries in Buffalo and Alamance. He died in 1824 at the age of ninety-nine, just 7 months shy of one hundred.⁵⁰

According to William Henry Foote, a number of Presbyterians migrated to the backcountry of North Carolina, and ministers who led them taught the ‘principles of the gospel independence, and inculcating those truths that made their hearers choose liberty, at the hazard of life, rather than oppression with abundance’.⁵¹ Governor Tryon sought to halt the Regulator uprising peaceably. Before taking action against the Regulators, Tryon called upon Thomas Polk, the prominent leader in Mecklenburg County, to help squelch the rebellion, because many from this region were members of Presbyterian churches. According to Kars, this was deliberate as Tryon called upon

⁵⁰ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, pp. 231-243 and E.W. Caruthers, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D.D.: Near Sixty Years Pastor of the Churches of Buffalo and Alamance* (Greensborough, NC: Swaim and Sherwood, 1842) and Moore, ‘Beginnings and Development of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina’, pp. 149-154.

⁵¹ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, p. 81.

Polk because of his connections with several Presbyterians throughout the region.⁵²

Herman Husband also recognised the important role that the Presbyterians played. He accused Edmund Fanning in a pamphlet named, 'A Fan for Fanning and a Touchstone to Tryon' of agreeing to establish a college in Mecklenburg County for the sake of bringing over Presbyterians to his side.⁵³

Initially, McAden, Pattillo, and Caldwell agreed with Tryon and attempted to moderate the Regulators' violence.⁵⁴ For example, in a letter written to Governor Tryon in August 1768, these ministers referred to the Regulators as 'unreasonable men'. However, while describing the Regulators as unreasonable, the ministers also reminded Governor Tryon subtly that his duty was to remedy or set right any grievances these men may have as prescribed in the 'Laws of their country'.⁵⁵ In addition, they later sent a letter to their churches seeking for anyone participating in the Regulator movement to cease with their resistance and violence.⁵⁶ All of their labours proved to be in vain because in May 1771, the Battle of Alamance occurred and became the final battle of the Regulator Movement.

⁵² Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, p. 126.

⁵³ Hermon Husband, 'A Fan for Fanning, and a touchstone to Tryon; Containing an impartial account of the rise a progress of the so much talked of Regulation in North Carolina (Boston: Printing Office of William Vassal, 1771) in *Some Eighteenth-Century Tracts Concerning North Carolina*, William K. Boyd, ed., (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton Company, 1927), pp. 339-392. Uniquely in this pamphlet, Husband compared himself to Francis Hutchinson, p. 343.

⁵⁴ Stokes, 'Henry Pattillo in North Carolina', pp. 383-384; Carruthers, *A sketch of the life and character of the Rev. David Caldwell*, pp. 102-190; Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, pp. 46-67.

⁵⁵ 'Letter from the Presbyterian Ministers to William Tryon' in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. VII, ed. Williams L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Joseph Daniels, 1886), pp. 813-814.

⁵⁶ 'Letter from the Presbyterian Pastors to the Presbyterian Inhabitants of North Carolina' in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. VII, ed. Williams L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Joseph Daniels, 1886), pp. 814-816.

Governor Tryon later executed six of the Regulators. The attitude of these ministers radically shifted because of the violent response from Tryon. The ministers initially defended the governor because of their original understanding of the magistracy, which stipulated non-resistance if a local magistrate fulfilled his duty to protect his subjects. However, owing to the execution of these men and the violent response of the provincial militia, the ministers moderated their understanding of the magistrate's role and deemed violent resistance justified. Likewise, in response to Tryon, those who lagged behind in their support of the Regulators later supported the Revolution.

Chapter 5 – Independence

Rebellion Declared in North Carolina

Ministers from the covenanting tradition preached ideas of resistance from pulpits, discussed them in pamphlets, and provided their ideas through declarations made with others in their communities. Although this thesis predominantly focuses on the backcountry of North Carolina, the influence of Presbyterianism was nation-wide as James G. Leyburn noted:

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the Presbyterian Church of the American cause was its national scope. The prompt alignment of Presbyterians with the patriotic movement was in some regions probably decisive; but the important point is that Presbyterians, more than members of any other religious body, were in touch with each other from Maine to Georgia. Moreover, their attachments was likely to be a patriotism for the cause of America as a whole, not a vindication of the rights of Massachusetts or New Jersey or any other state. *The communications of the Scotch-Irish family in the Piedmont of North Carolina were much more certain to be northward and southward through the whole area of Scotch-Irish settlement, than eastward, where lay the center of provincial government and the capital town of the province.*¹

The North Carolina backcountry proved to be crucial in the calls for resistance and ultimately American independence.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, a significant alteration took place between the Scottish understanding of covenant and the American interpretation. Both agreed national or social covenants were conditional or contractual, but the notion of perpetual covenants promoted action greater than resistance. This gave the American

¹ James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962), p. 29. [emphasis mine]

Covenanters justification for the American colonies to actively rebel. Yet, where the Scottish Covenanters demanded the king or government to reform, the American Covenanter tradition expected the people or nation to reform, which prompted a higher call for revolution. This fell in line with Johannes Althusius's theory of resistance, which James Stewart and Alexander Shields promoted in *Jus Populi Vindicatum* and *A Hind Let Loose* respectfully.²

For some Covenanters, the idea of resistance was not in the category of tyrannicide. Their ideology was more about resisting tyranny than it was about killing the tyrant. This was where the American Patriots became radical. They never sought to kill George III. They effectively showed that the people established the boundaries of his rule and removed him from power over the American Colonies when he failed to protect his subjects. So, rather than removing him from his throne, they removed themselves from his dominion. Althusius's passive theory of resistance in his work *Politica Methodice Digesta, Atque Exemplis Sacris Et Profanis Illustrata* justified resistance to tyranny as:

² Johannes Althusius, *Politica*, An Abridged Translation of Politics Methodically Set Forth and Illustrated with Sacred and Profane Examples, ed. and Trans. Frederick S. Carney. Foreword by Daniel J. Elazar, (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1995); James Stewart, *Jus populi vindicatum, or, The peoples right to defend themselves and their covenanted religion vindicated wherein the act of defence and vindication which was interprised anno 1666 is particularly justified ... being a reply to the first part of Survey of Naphtaly &c. / by a friend to true Christian liberty* (London: s.n., 1669); and Alexander Shields, *A Hind Let Loose, or, An historical representation of the testimonies of the Church of Scotland for the interest of Christ with the true state thereof in all its periods : together with a vindication of the present testimonie, against the Popish, prelatical, & malignant enemies of that church ... : wherein several controversies of greatest consequence are enquired into, and in some measure cleared, concerning hearing of the curats, owning of the present tyrannie, taking of ensnaring oaths & bonds, frequenting of field meetings, defensive resistance of tyrannical violence ... / by a lover of true liberty*, (np, 1687); For further details regarding Althusius's theory of resistance, please see specifically chapter XXXVIII regarding Tyranny and Its Remedies; For studies comparing Althusius to Calvin, see John Witte, Jr., *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 143-208 and Matt McCulloch, 'Johannes Althusius' *Politica*: The Culmination of Calvin's Right of Resistance' in *European Legacy* 11, no. 5 (Nov 2006), pp. 485-499.

The process by which the ephors (lesser magistrates) impede the tyranny of the supreme magistrate by word and deed. And when he is incurable, or the rights (jura) of the associated body cannot otherwise be kept sound, well protected, and in good condition, or the commonwealth free from evil, they depose him and cast him out of their midst.³

He further contended that the people within the commonwealth should ‘join themselves to a resisting ephor’ and ‘it shall be permitted one part of the realm, or individual ephors or estates of the realm, to withdraw from subjection to the tyranny of their magistrate and to defend themselves’.⁴ However, according to John Witte, ‘Althusius’s theory of resistance and revolt against tyrants was, in fact, textbook Calvinism. Like Calvin, Althusius called for “moderate”, “Structured”, and “Orderly” resistance against tyranny, without popular insurrection or private regicide which could only lead to anarchy.’⁵ However, as noted briefly above, this interpretation shifted in Scotland under Rutherford and Stewart with a later justification for resistance by individual subjects.

Calls for Resistance (1740-1755)

Covenanting ministers communicated their ideas about theology and politics through their sermons. The minister’s influence expanded further than his own town or village, but to an entire region. Historians have chronicled the impact of the minister’s influence in the Great Awakening and throughout the American Revolution.⁶ In North

³ Althusius, *Politica*, p. 193.

⁴ Althusius, *Politica*, p. 194.

⁵ John Witte, Jr., *The Reformation of Rights: Law, Religion, and Human Rights in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p.154.

⁶ For more detailed accounts pertaining to this, please see Thomas S. Kidd, *God of Liberty: A Religious History of the American Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 2010); Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People*, 2nd ed., (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004); Patricia U. Bonomi, *Under the Cope of Heaven: Religion, Society, and Politics in America, updated edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990); Keith L. Griffin, *Revolution and Religion: American Revolutionary War and the Reformed clergy* (New York:

Carolina, ministers such as Samuel Davies, Alexander Craighead, Henry Pattillo, and David Caldwell became highly respected, and as a result, many people wanted to hear them preach and to read what they wrote. As noted previously, Craighead promoted resistance to the crown and later active rebellion against the monarchy. Although he died before the time of the Regulator Movement and the later American Revolution, his ideas of resistance influenced the families he ministered to, his successors, and other ministers throughout the backcountry of North Carolina. Governor Arthur Hobbs described these families in a letter written to the Board of Trade in London:

There are at present 75 families on my lands I viewed betwixt 30 and 40 of them, and except two there was not less than 5 or 5 to 10 children in each family, each going barefooted in their shifts in the warm weather, no woman wearing more than a shift and one thin petticoat; they are a colony from Ireland removed from Pennsylvania, of what we call Scotch-Irish Presbyterians who with other in the neighboring Tracts has settled together in order to have *a teacher of their own opinion and choice*.⁷

Craighead was significant in the lives of these 75 families. In August 1766, Reverend Andrew Morton described Craighead and his followers in a letter written to the secretary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in London:

The inhabitants of Mecklenburg are entire dissenters of the most rigid kind – That they had *a solemn leag[u]e and covenant teacher* settled among them That they were in general greatly averse to the Church of England – and that they looked upon a law

Paragon House, 1994); Nathan O. Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1977); Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966); Mark A. Noll, *The Old Religion in the New World: The History of North American Christianity* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002); C. Gregg Singer, *A Theological Interpretation of American History*, revised edition. (Birmingham, AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2009); Michael Walzer, *The Revolution of the Saints: A Study of the Origins of Radical Politics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965); Phillip Goff, 'Revivals and Revolution: Historiographic Turns Since Alan Heimert's "Religion and the American Mind"' *Church History*, Vol. 67, No. 4 (Dec 1988), pp. 695-721; Perry Miller, 'From the Covenant to the Revival' in *The Shaping of American Religion*, eds James Ward Smith and A Leland Jamison (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 322-368.

⁷ 'Letter from Governor Dobbs to the Board', 24 August 1755, *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. V, ed. Williams T. Saunders (Raleigh: Joseph Daniels, 1887) pp. 355-356. [Italics Mine]

lately enacted in this province for the better establishment of the Church as oppressive as the Stamp Act and were determined to prevent its taking place there, by opposing the settlement of any Minister of the Church of England that might be amongst them – In short it was very evident that in Mecklenburg County I could be of little use to the honorable Society and I thought it but prudent to decline embroiling myself with an infatuated people to no purpose and trusting that the Venerable Society, upon a just representation of the matter would not be dissatisfied with my conduct.⁸

In many ways, Craighead was Charlotte's 'father' through his pastoring of the many families that moved down from Pennsylvania. Because of this, the deep-rooted convictions of Scottish covenanting political theology throughout Charlotte and the surrounding area were firmly established. It was through these families and relationships that ideas of resistance expanded to deliberate calls for rebellion against the crown.

Calls for Rebellion (1755-1775)

Rebellion broadly defined was the violent act of resistance against an established government. As seen in the previous chapter concerning the notion of insurgency within covenanting thought, there was an escalation of resistance from simply refusing to comply with the government to rebellion and participating in violent acts against the government. This push for rebellion maintained a hope of promoting change or reformation within the government. However, the dilemma for the Covenanters was one of loyalty and allegiance. The mention of loyalty as it pertained

⁸ 'Letter from Mr Andrew Morton to the Secretary', 25 August 1766', in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. VII, ed. William L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1890), p. 253. [Italics Mine]

to the Covenanters may seem contradictory when establishing a political theology of resistance or rebellion, but according to Nicole Greenspan:

The experience of the civil war profoundly shaped notions of allegiance... The trial and execution of Charles I and the succession of his son afforded the opportunity to redefine the terms of loyalty and its parameters. Contemporaries recognized multiple allegiances, including to God, church, monarch, parliament, country, and nation, which could come in conflict with one another and require reordering or prioritizing.⁹

This ‘conflict with one another’ was evident with the Covenanters in Scotland and in America. This was the purpose for so-called ‘renewals’. The Covenanters demonstrated this loyalty best in their allegiances placed on covenant and church.

For the Scottish Covenanters, the one true king was God, and it was their banner ‘For Christ’s Crown and Covenant’ that they established their allegiance. According to J.C.D. Clark, ‘allegiance had a religious dimension, and was therefore denominationally specific’.¹⁰ This was also keenly evident also in the covenanting tradition within radical Presbyterianism in America. Therefore, as response to this, it justified rebellion to the government already in place and later promoted revolution and the establishment of a new government.

With the early American Covenanters, the notion of allegiance to country was irrelevant, as they initially remained loyal to the ruling British monarchy. Regarding the followers of Craighead, Alice Baldwin has written that ‘they must have had deep convictions of the sacredness of covenants, of their right to hold the governor and sovereign to strict account, and to forswear all allegiance to those who violated their

⁹ Nicole Greenspan, ‘Charles II, Exile, and the Problem of Allegiance’ in *The Historical Journal* 54, no. 1 (March 2011), p. 74.

¹⁰ J.C.D. Clark, *The Language of Liberty, 1660-1832: Political Discourse and Social Dynamics in the Anglo-American World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 51.

rights and liberty'.¹¹ However, this loyalty later shifted. Their allegiance to nation is where the waters became a bit cloudy. This choosing of a new nation as defined by Clark when he tackled the notion of 'nation' and national identity in *The Language of Liberty* emphasised:

Allegiance, even if redefined as contractual, still contained no legal tendency to its own dissolution. Contracts, once made, were still generally assumed to be permanent. The idea that allegiance was 'volitional' – that the individual could choose and re-choose his own nationality – became a reality only after the Revolution: it was not a prior cause of the drive to independence. No alternative matrix of group identity arose before 1776 to challenge the monarchical one.¹²

However, the American Covenanters were a group whose shared understanding of resistance and purpose arose well before 1776 and as such, their willingness to choose a new nation became a reality. And in so doing, their allegiance and loyalty moved to the American cause, thus prompting several in the backcountry of North Carolina to join in the call for independence and the establishment of a new country.

The Stamp Act prompted calls for rebellion against the crown. Yet, these calls evolved and later led to the culmination of violence. The tyrant, Governor Tryon was a covenant breaker, and as such, the people rebelled against him with the intention of making right his wrongs. Therefore, the hanging of the six Regulators shifted the focus from this being simply an 'issue' for the Regulators but became an issue for the entire colony. As this shifting view occurred, it provided a doorway for ministers to walk through and call for active rebellion instead of passive resistance. Ministers justified the active resistance as an act of defence in direct opposition to tyranny as

¹¹Alice M. Baldwin, 'Sowers of Sedition: The Political Theories of Some of the New Light Presbyterian Clergy of Virginia and North Carolina' in *The William & Mary Quarterly* 5, no 1 (January 1948), p. 71.

¹² Clark, *The Language of Liberty*, p. 54.

promoted by Henderson, Craighead, and Shields. This promoted change and the ministers encouraged the men to join the patriot cause and become active, not only for the sake of their individual liberty, but for the salvation of the colony as a whole, thus declaring and demanding their independence in 1775-1776. Ultimately, for the radical Presbyterians in North Carolina, resistance and rebellion simply was not enough. Rather than toil with striving to reform the current government, they believed in establishing a new government. And, for many in the backcountry, the hangings indicated that Tryon abused his authority and was a tyrant. Why then did Mecklenburg County, North Carolina become one of the ‘most rebellious’ in this area? Simply answered, this occurred through the close-knit relationship of seven Presbyterian Churches in the region, known as the ‘Mecklenburg Seven Sisters’.

‘Mecklenburg Seven Sisters’

The Scottish covenanting notion of banding or bonding, as mentioned previously in this thesis, coupled with the radical Presbyterian justification for violent resistance provided the perfect environment for the blaze of independence to spread. The banded families that journeyed from Pennsylvania started a few churches in Mecklenburg County, but due to the limited number of ministers in the region shared pastors. For example, Craighead served as the pastor of Rocky River Church, but later led Sugaw [Sugar] Creek Church and he helped to lead the congregations of Hopewell and Providence. Craighead’s successor at Sugaw [Sugar] Creek and Rocky River was Joseph Alexander. Alexander was also the son-in-law of Samuel Davies and ordained alongside David Caldwell by Henry Pattillo, both of whom joined the patriot cause after the Regulator Movement. The *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* described Alexander as:

...an enthusiastic patriot. Particularly influential was a meeting at his church after the Battle of Camden, at which he encouraged the patriots to continue their efforts to win independence. Alexander was closely related to the men in his first parish who drafted the Mecklenburg Resolves, and he became so aggressive in his encouragement of the Revolution that the male members of his church brought rifles to Sabbath services to guard the minister and his congregation.¹³

This is but one small example of ministers in the region who made calls for revolution. Along with the interconnections between the ministers in the area and the banding of families was the organisation of Presbyterian churches known as the ‘Seven Sisters’. This consisted of the churches known as Sugaw [Sugar] Creek, Hopewell, Providence, Steele Creek, Centre, Poplar Tent, and Rocky River.¹⁴ Rather than follow in the footsteps of their predecessors and have divisions within the church similar to the Old Side—New Side debate, many of the North Carolina ministers sought to promote unity. One example was through a sermon preached by Pattillo named, ‘The Division Among Christians’.¹⁵ In it, Pattillo stressed the need for the church to remain banded in union or covenant with one another in order to be an example to the nation. Unity was vital for the purposes of covenant.

Coupled with this tradition and interpretation of ecclesiastical polity, this band of churches later played a vital role in the larger community in and around Charlotte with calls and acts of civil revolution. These churches together provided most governmental leaders throughout Mecklenburg County and the delegates who

¹³ Durward T. Stokes, ‘Alexander, Joseph’ in *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 1, ed. William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), p. 16.

¹⁴ Walter W. Moore, ‘Beginnings and Development of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina’ in *Appreciations and Historical Addresses* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1914), p. 140.

¹⁵ Henry Pattillo, *Sermons, &c. I. On the divisions among Christians. II. On the necessity of regeneration to future happiness. III. The scripture doctrine of election. IV. Extract of a letter from Mr. Whitefield to Mr. Wesley. V. An address to the Deists.* (Wilmington, DE: James Adams, 1788), pp. x, 15-56.

confirmed the Mecklenburg Resolves and sent delegates to the Third, Fourth, and Fifth Provincial Congresses to declare independence from the British Crown. They also provided many of the men who fought with the Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia. By recognising their close relationships with one another and their participation in Presbyterian Churches led by ministers brought up in the covenanting tradition, one can see the connection and contribution of Scottish covenanting ideology in Mecklenburg County and their representation in North Carolina. The interconnections between these families further demonstrated how the political theology of Scottish covenanting thought was so well rooted that it spread throughout the county, thus making it one of the ‘most hostile’ regions in all of the colonies. A few meetings and declarations took place leading up to and during the American Revolution and their participants exemplified the interconnections and contributions to the call for independence.

Mecklenburg Resolves (31 May 1775)

In May of 1775 after hearing of the news of the Battles at Lexington and Concord, the Mecklenburg County Committee of Safety met and established resolutions that suspended the authority of the king upon Mecklenburg County. The result from this assembly of the committee was the Mecklenburg Resolves.



The South-Carolina Gazette; and Country Journal of June 13, 1775
(No. 498) Charleston Library Society, Charleston, SC.

The Mecklenburg Resolves avowed that ‘the American colonies are declared to be in a state of actual rebellion, we conceive that all laws and commissions confirmed by or derived from authority of the King and Parliament are annulled and vacated and the former civil constitution of these colonies for the present wholly suspended’.¹⁶ This was an important line for the resolutions and was in direct opposition to the oath of allegiance many from this region gave after the Regulator Movement. By severing this tie to the king as their authority, it gave just cause for revolution and the establishment of a new government. Furthermore, some of the radical Presbyterians in this region who moved down from Pennsylvania, previously obligated to the *Renewal of the Covenants*, justified a defensive war. It stated that ‘we find ourselves under the necessity from the Word of God ... to declare a defensive war against all usurpers of the Royal Prerogative of the glorious Lamb of God’.¹⁷ For these American Covenanters, since the king declared the Colonies in rebellion, he was acting as a tyrant, which justified a defensive war, as Shields laid out in *A Hind Let Loose*.¹⁸

The Resolves further demonstrated a sense of covenant, the seventeenth resolution asserted that ‘any person refusing to yield obedience to the above resolves shall be considered equally criminal and liable to the same punishment as the offenders above last mentioned’.¹⁹ This clearly showed the authors’ intent was unity for the whole of

¹⁶ ‘Mecklenburg Committee Resolves [as printed in the South-Carolina Gazette, and Country Journal of 13th June, 1775], 31 May 1775’, in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. IX, ed. William L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1886), pp. 1282-1285. [Afterwards Mecklenburg Resolves]

¹⁷ Alexander Craighead, *Renewal of the Covenants, National and Solemn League; A Confession of Sins; and Engagement to Duties; and a testimony; As they were carried on at Middle Octorara in Pennsylvania, November 11, 1743. Together with an introductory preface* (Philadelphia: B. Franklin 1743, 1748), pp. 69-70. [Afterwards referred to as *Renewal of the Covenants*]

¹⁸ Shields, *A Hind Let Loose*, pp. 576-633.

¹⁹ Mecklenburg Resolves, p. 1284.

Mecklenburg County in covenant with one another for the cause of independence. To do otherwise, one was breaking this covenant and equally guilty as the king and his magistrates. Stepping beyond the actual words of the Mecklenburg Resolves, the Scottish contribution to the American Revolution was evident in Mecklenburg County and proven by looking at those who played key roles in the calls for revolution and their banded connections with one another.

There were potentially thirty-two members of the Mecklenburg Committee of Safety. Twenty-eight were Presbyterian of which all but one were members of one of the ‘Seven Sisters’, namely Captain James Jack who attended Thyatira Church.²⁰ Of the four not listed specifically with a Presbyterian Church, three were considered ‘unbelievers’ or ‘Deists’ and one was Anglican.²¹ However, pertaining to the Resolves, there was no evidence of who exactly was on the committee beyond those specifically mentioned in the Resolves. The only persons listed were Colonel Thomas Polk, Dr Joseph Kennedy, and Dr Ephraim Brevard, who served as the clerk of the committee.

²⁰ I generated and compiled the figures and tables within this thesis in an MS Excel database, but for the complete details, please see Table 5 in the Appendix. It is likely that there were additional members of the Committee of Safety, but for the sake of this thesis, I collected this data using the following texts: John H. Wheeler, *The Lives and Characters of the Signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, of the 20th of May, 1775* (Charlotte, NC: Observer Book and Job Power Press Print, 1875) and Victor C. King, *Lives and Times of the 27 Signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of May 20, 1775* (Charlotte, NC: NP, 1956); One historian gave a list of 30 potential members of the committee, Benson John Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution; or, illustrations by Pen and Pencil, of the History, Biography, Scenery, Relics, and Traditions of the War for Independence*, vol. II, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1859), pp. 410-429; William A. Graham, *General Joseph Graham and his papers on North Carolina Revolutionary History* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1904), pp. 25-41; and George W. Graham, *The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence May 20, 1775 and the lives of its signers*, (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1905).

²¹ See Table 5 in the Appendix, Charles Alexander was considered by George Graham as an ‘unbeliever’, see Graham, *The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence*, p. 132. Charles Sellers labelled Ezra Alexander and Ezekiel Polk as Deists, see Charles Grier Sellers, ‘Colonel Ezekiel Polk: Pioneer and Patriarch’ in *The William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 10, no. 1, (January, 1953), pp. 90-91.

The first member listed and confirmed present at the time was Colonel Thomas Polk. He was of Scots-Irish descent and came to North Carolina around the time of Craighead and the others from Pennsylvania.²² There was no record that he was a member of any of the seven sisters, but his wife Susannah Spratt and her family were prominent members of Steele Creek Church. According to Marjoleine Kars, Governor Tryon appointed Polk during the time of the Regulation Movement to help recruit Presbyterians to his side, which clearly showed his connections to the Presbyterian Churches in the area.²³ Initially, he supported Governor Tryon in 1771 against the Regulators, but later he became a supporter of the patriot cause in the American Revolution.

The Resolves did not definitively acknowledge Kennedy a member of the committee, but appointed him ‘to purchase three hundred pounds of powder, six hundred pounds of lead, and one thousand flints for the use of the militia of this county and deposit the same in such place as the committee hereafter may direct’.²⁴ Kennedy was a ‘prominent patriot of Charlotte’ and a resident of Mecklenburg County ‘as early as 1766’.²⁵ He ‘was the first resident physician and the first man of medical education to practice in Mecklenburg County’.²⁶

²² Hugh F. Rankin, ‘Polk, Thomas’ in *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 5, ed. William S. Powell, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), pp. 112-113; and C.L. Hunter, *Sketches of western North Carolina, historical and biographical: illustrating principally the Revolutionary period of Mecklenburg, Rowan, Lincoln, and adjoining counties, accompanied with miscellaneous information, much of it never before published* (Raleigh: The Raleigh News Steam Job Print, 1877), pp. 54-57.

²³ Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p. 126.

²⁴ Mecklenburg Resolves, p. 1285.

²⁵ Alma Lackey Wilson, ‘Kennedy Family’ in *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* vol. 45, no. 151 (April 1947), p. 130.

²⁶ Wilson, ‘Kennedy Family’, p. 130.

Ephraim Brevard was the son-in-law of Colonel Polk. He was a resident physician in Charlotte after Joseph Kennedy. He was not Scottish in ancestry, but he became an active participant in Hopewell Church in Mecklenburg County. He attended the school led by John McKnitt Alexander, who was of Scottish descent and moved to North Carolina with the other families that journeyed with Craighead in 1755. In addition, Brevard attended the College of New Jersey (Princeton) in 1768 under the leadership of John Witherspoon.²⁷ Through these connections, he was well acquainted with Scottish covenanting thought.

AUTOGRAPHS OF THE MEMBERS OF THE MECKLENBURG COMMITTEE.

Autographs of the Members of the Mecklenburg Committee
*The Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution*²⁸

²⁷ C.L. Hunter, *Sketches of western North Carolina, historical and biographical: illustrating principally the Revolutionary period of Mecklenburg, Rowan, Lincoln, and adjoining counties, accompanied with miscellaneous information, much of it never before published*, (Raleigh: The Raleigh News Steam Job Print, 1877), pp. 22-23, 47-48.

²⁸ Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution*, p. 619.

The Mecklenburg County Instructions (1 September 1775)

In July 1775, Presbyterian Ministers in Philadelphia sent a letter to the Presbyterian inhabitants of North Carolina. In this letter, the ministers Francis Alison, James Sprout, George Duffield, and Robert Davidson expressed their strong desire for all North Carolina Presbyterians to join in the ‘glorious struggle for liberty’.²⁹ They wrote energetically against the taxation from Parliament and the lack of representation, which was ‘evident beyond contest’. They went on and wrote that:

To take any man's money, without his consent, is unjust and contrary to reason and the law of God, and the Gospel of Christ; it is contrary to Magna Charta, or the Great Charter and Constitution of England; and to complain, and even *to resist such a lawless power, is just, and reasonable, and no rebellion*. But it is said, that the Parliament of England has supreme power, and that no one ought to resist. *This we allow*, while they make Acts that are reasonable, and according to the British Constitution; but their power has bounds and limits, that they must not exceed: they are limited by the Laws of God and of reason; they are limited by the fundamental laws of the Constitution, and by the Great Charter of England.³⁰

On this, the Pennsylvania and North Carolina Presbyterians agreed that it was right to resist. Later in the letter, the Pennsylvania Presbyterian ministers asserted against rebellion and revolution and declared that they were ‘neither disloyal to our King, nor attempting, nor desiring to set up Governments independent of Britain’.³¹ They cautioned the North Carolina Presbyterians that:

We must put our trust in God, who is a present help in time of trouble, but we must depend on Him in the use of means; we must unite, if possible, as one man, to

²⁹ ‘An Address to the Ministers and Presbyterian congregations in North Carolina’, in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. X, ed. William L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1886), p. 224. See also, *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod, 1706-1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1904), pp. 466-469.

³⁰ ‘An Address to the Ministers and Presbyterian congregations in North Carolina’, p. 224.

³¹ ‘An Address to the Ministers and Presbyterian congregations in North Carolina’, p. 222.

maintain our just rights, *not by fire and sword, or by shedding the blood of our fellow subjects*, unless we be driven to it in our own defence.³²

However, the understanding of the struggle was quite different in North Carolina as evidenced in the Instructions given to the Delegates from Mecklenburg County.

With this letter, the Presbyterians in Pennsylvania specifically advised North Carolinians not to join in a bloody war or revolt as this was an act of treason or sedition. Mecklenburg Presbyterians did the opposite. They joined in the violent patriot cause for independence by joining the regiments of patriot militia. In so doing, they demonstrated how they relied more on the Scottish covenanting tradition with the shifting understanding of resistance. This was not the first time that those of covenanting tradition differed with the ministers in Pennsylvania. Francis Alison, one of the authors of this letter, filed a complaint in 1740 against Craighead for his requiring the parents to accept the Solemn League and Covenant when baptizing their children, and he had Craighead later suspended from the presbytery.³³ Later, the presbytery deemed Craighead's pamphlet concerning the *Renewal of the Covenants* as treasonous and seditious in that it permitted revolt against the crown.³⁴ North Carolina Presbyterians assumed Craighead's mantle and his ideology and nothing deterred them regardless of how many threats the Pennsylvania Presbyterians made to disassociate. Although given a letter in July not to revolt, but to resist passively, the ministers of Mecklenburg County ignored the requests of the Pennsylvania ministers

³² 'An Address to the Ministers and Presbyterian congregations in North Carolina', p. 226.

³³ Presbyterian Church in the USA Synod of New York and Philadelphia, *Minutes of Donegal Presbytery: 1732-1750* (Microfilm. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Historical Society, 1966), pp. 202-206 and Richard Webster, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in America, from its origin until the year 1760 with biographical sketches of its early ministers* (Philadelphia: Joseph M. Wilson, 1857), pp. 435-436.

³⁴ *Minutes of Donegal Presbytery*, p. 180 and Webster, *A History of the Presbyterian Church*, p. 435.

and set out to define their own means of how to resist. The middle colonies wanted to maintain their relationship with the crown and Great Britain, but the North Carolina Presbyterians wanted something altogether different – independence. The Mecklenburg Presbyterians broadened their understanding of resistance. They used this to justify their call to revolution, set out to fight against the crown, join in the patriot cause, and sought the establishment of a new government as evidenced in the Provincial Congresses in North Carolina.

Preceding the Third Provincial Congress of North Carolina held 20 August to 10 September 1775, the delegates from Mecklenburg Country set out specific instructions on what matters they were to address at the congress. The instructions explicitly coached the delegates to ‘vote that the late Province of North Carolina is and of right ought to be a free and independent state’.³⁵ If a vote for a civil government under the authority of the people and the private natural and unalienable rights lack confirmation from the congress, then the instructions demanded protest from the Mecklenburg delegates. This charge and aim was unusual for an established government that was presently under a monarchy. They were further instructed ‘to oppose the establishing an ecclesiastic supremacy in the sovereign authority of the State. You are to oppose the toleration of the popish idolatrous worship. If this should not be confirmed, protest and remonstrate’.³⁶ Through these specific instructions, it

³⁵ ‘Instructions for the Delegates of Mecklenburg County proposed to the Consideration of the County’ Folder 2, Mecklenburg Declaration Papers, #501, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Published as ‘Instructions for the Delegates of Mecklenburg County proposed to the Consideration of the County [Reprinted From Wheeler’s History of North Carolina], August 1775’, in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. X, ed. William L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1886), p. 239.

³⁶ ‘Instructions for the Delegates of Mecklenburg County’, p. 239.

was clear that the delegates were to support the cause for the radical Presbyterians in Mecklenburg County. The Third Provincial Congress abstained from specifically calling for independence from Great Britain but established that North Carolina had the right to resist any authority, whether the King, Parliament, or any constituency who attempted to impose taxes.³⁷

Halifax Resolves (12 April 1776)

From 4 April 1776 to 14 May 1776, the Fourth Provincial Congress of North Carolina met in Halifax, North Carolina. The Halifax Resolves were the result of this assembly, which was the first resolution adopted in the American Colonies calling for independence from Great Britain.³⁸ The delegates of the North Carolina Congress sent the Halifax Resolves to Philadelphia and read them before the Continental Congress on 27 May 1776. By examining the representatives chosen from Mecklenburg County as they were ardent supporters of the patriot cause and active parishioners with the ‘Seven Sisters’, one can infer the contribution of Scottish covenanting thought to North Carolina’s call for independence. The appointed representatives were John Pfifer, Robert Irwin, and John McKnitt Alexander.

The Mecklenburg Committee appointed John Pfifer during this congress to be a member of the committee to settle the civil accounts of this province and the

³⁷ ‘The Journal of the Proceeding of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina, held at Hillsborough 20th August, A.D. 1775’, in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. X, ed. William L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1886), pp. 171 and 212.

³⁸ ‘The Journal of the Provincial Congress at Halifax, North Carolina’ [From MS. Records in Office of Secretary of State], 04 April – 14 May 1776, in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. X, ed. William L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1886), p. 499-590.

committee for the better regulation of the militia. They also selected him to purchase 36 horses for the militia in the district of Salisbury.³⁹ John Pfifer was an active member of one of the seven sisters, Poplar Tent Church (Presbyterian) under the leadership of Reverend Hezekiah James Balch, who purportedly authored the Mecklenburg Declaration. Balch served as the pastor for Poplar Tent and Rocky River Presbyterian churches, which were Craighead's original appointments. The Presbytery of Donegal in Pennsylvania licensed Balch near the region where many from the covenanting tradition came. He later became a minister within the Hanover Presbytery, which Craighead and Davies established.⁴⁰ Pfifer also served as a major under Colonel Thomas Polk and fought in the battles of Great Cane Brake (SC), Snow Campaign (SC), and Moores Creek Bridge, which was the first significant engagement within North Carolina.⁴¹

The second delegate was Robert Irwin who served on the committee of Claims, to settle and allow military and naval accounts.⁴² He, too, was of Scots-Irish descent and an elder of Steele Creek Church for over 20 years and ultimately buried there.⁴³ He served in the Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia from 1775-1783, with a brief

³⁹ 'Journal of the Provincial Congress at Halifax, North Carolina' in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. X, pp. 504, 507, and 535.

⁴⁰ 'Minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, from A.D. 1758 to 1788', in *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod, 1706-1788*. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1904. p. 289 and Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, pp. 438-443.

⁴¹ J. D. Lewis, *NC Patriots 1775-1783: Their Own Words*, Volume 2, part 2, – The Provincial and State Troops, (Little River, SC: eBook by Author, 2012), p. 779 and Hunter, *Sketches of Western North Carolina*, pp. 53-54.

⁴² 'Journal of the Provincial Congress at Halifax, North Carolina' in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. X, p. 504.

⁴³ John Douglas, *The History of Steele Creek Presbyterian Church, 1745-1978: Mecklenburg County, Charlotte, North Carolina* (Charlotte, NC: Craftsman Printing and Publishing House, 1978), p. 27; and R.D.W. Connor, William Kenneth Boyd, and Joseph Gregoire de Roulhac Hamilton, *History of North Carolina*, vol. VI (Chicago and New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1919), p. 40.

appointment as Captain of the 2nd Salisbury District Militiamen in 1776. He too fought in the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge.⁴⁴

The final and most prominent delegate was John McKnitt Alexander. During the Halifax Assembly, he served alongside Irwin on the committee of Claims. Alexander was born 6 June 1733 in Cecil, Maryland, and later moved to Chester County, Pennsylvania, where his father, James served as an elder in the New Castle Presbytery within the Synod of Philadelphia. The Alexanders moved from Pennsylvania to the piedmont region of North Carolina in 1754 along with the others who journeyed with Craighead. John McKnitt served as an elder with Hopewell Church from 1762–1817. He actively attended the Synod of the Carolinas for over 25 years.⁴⁵ He also became the first State Senator from Mecklenburg, County.⁴⁶ Like Pfifer and Irwin, Alexander served in the Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia as Captain and fought in the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge.⁴⁷

The Mecklenburg County Instructions (1 November 1776)

After the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia, there was a charge given throughout North Carolina to form the Fifth Provincial Congress, which met in Halifax 12 November 1776 – 23 December 1776. Prior to this, the committee from Mecklenburg County gave the delegates specific instructions on what to seek during the assembly on behalf of the inhabitants of Mecklenburg County. As to the specific

⁴⁴ Lewis, *NC Patriots 1775-1783*, p. 507 and Hunter, *Sketches of Western North Carolina*, p. 50-51.

⁴⁵ John E. Alexander, *A record of the descendants of John Alexander of Lanarkshire, Scotland, and his wife, Margaret Glasson, who emigrated from County Armagh, Ireland, to Chester County, Pennsylvania, A.D. 1736* (Philadelphia: Alfred Martien, 1878), pp. 202-210.

⁴⁶ Hunter, *Sketches of western North Carolina*, pp. 43-44.

⁴⁷ Lewis, *NC Patriots 1775-1783*, p. 9.

instructions given, these men were to ‘consent and approve the Declaration of the Continental Congress declaring the thirteen United Colonies free and Independent States’.⁴⁸ Furthermore, they received instruction to ‘establish a free government under the authority of the people’.⁴⁹ As such, these instructions demonstrated Covenanter ideology to establish a federal system of government. The calls for revolution were well beyond the acts of violence and war but were through the establishment of new institutions of government and education and discussed further in chapter seven. Covenanting thought determined that government best occurred through the people’s choice of leaders, rather than the implementation of government through hereditary means. Again, looking at the words of the Instructions one must again recognise the Scottish contribution to the American Revolution in Mecklenburg County by looking at those who played key roles and their relationships with one another. Two of the delegates sent previously attended Congresses, Robert Erwin (Irwin) and John Phifer (Pfifer). However, for this meeting, the committee sent three additional delegates, Waightstill Avery, Hezekiah Alexander, and Zaccheus Wilson.

Avery was the first attorney general of North Carolina. He attended the College of New Jersey (Princeton) along with Dr Ephraim Brevard and Rev Hezekiah James Balch. He moved to Charlotte, North Carolina in 1770 and lived with Hezekiah Alexander until 1778. Avery was ‘an avowed Presbyterian of Puritan extraction’.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ ‘Instructions to the Delegates from Mecklenburg to the Provincial Congress at Halifax in November 1776’ [Reprinted from the University Magazine. vol. 4, p. 259.], 1 November 1776, in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. X, ed. William L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1886), p. 870a.

⁴⁹ ‘Instructions to the Delegates from Mecklenburg to the Provincial Congress at Halifax in November 1776’, p. 870a.

⁵⁰ W. S. Pearson, ‘Waightstill Avery’ in *Biographical History of North Carolina from Colonial Times to the Present*, vol. 7. eds. Samuel A. Ashe, Stephen B. Weeks, and Charles L. Van Noppen

Hezekiah Alexander was the older brother to John McKnitt Alexander mentioned previously. In 1764, Hezekiah purchased land in the Sugaw [Sugar] Creek area of Mecklenburg County and became an elder at Sugaw [Sugar] Creek Church while Craighead was minister. Again, like his brother, Pfifer, and Irwin, Hezekiah served in the Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia as Captain and fought in the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge.⁵¹ Zaccheus Wilson moved to Mecklenburg County at the time when the Alexanders came in the 1750s, where he initially served at Poplar Tent Church, but later became an elder at Steele Creek Church. He served as Captain of the Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia, fought in the battle of Kings Mountain, and later participated in the 1788 convention for the ratification of the United States Constitution.⁵²

The interconnections between these men further demonstrated how the political theology of Scottish covenanting thought was so prevalent in the region and gave reason for its description as one of the ‘most hostile’ in all the American Colonies. The calls for resistance, rebellion, and revolution did not occur within a vacuum. These were because of the elevated roles given to the pastors and ministers in the backcountry of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

(Greensboro, NC: Charles L. Van Noppen Publisher, 1908), pp. 1-6; and Hunter, *Sketches of Western North Carolina*, pp. 44-45.

⁵¹ Norris W. Preyer, *Hezekiah Alexander and the Revolution in the Backcountry* (Charlotte, NC: Heritage Printers, 1987) and Norris W. Preyer, ‘Alexander, Hezekiah’ in *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 1, ed. William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), pp. 14-15; and Hunter, *Sketches of Western North Carolina*, p. 42.

⁵² Douglas, *The History of Steele Creek Presbyterian Church*, p. 32 and Hunter, *Sketches of Western North Carolina*, p. 57.

By looking at the men who participated in the Mecklenburg County Committee of Safety or the Provincial Congresses of North Carolina, their connections with the ‘Seven Sisters’, and their active participation in local and provincial government, one can see that their proclamations demonstrated Scottish covenanting tradition through Rutherford’s *Lex, Rex*, Stewart’s *Naphtali* and *Jus Populi Vindictum*, and Craighead’s radical influence as the ministers followed in their footsteps. By forming the Committee of Safety, the citizens within Mecklenburg County established their own authority, where they could then justify revolution against the magistracy. ‘Many Calvinists’, including Rutherford, as David Kopel summarised, ‘believed that even under tyranny, revolution had to be led by established authorities, such as local governments resisting an oppressive central government’.⁵³ Likewise, because of the common relationships, education, backgrounds, and persuasions, one can tacitly know and understand that the American Covenanters took on a more radical view or interpretation of the Scottish Covenanters’ theology of resistance. And, through their words, they contributed to the patriot cause of the American Revolution especially in the backcountry of North Carolina.

A few Presbyterian Churches in the Cape Fear region in Eastern North Carolina initially were Loyalists who supported and fought on behalf of the British, such as Old Bluff, Longstreet, and Barbecue. These were prominently Highland Scots Presbyterians led by Reverend James Campbell due to his ability to speak Gaelic and English. When he first came to North Carolina in 1757, he subscribed not to oppose the doctrine, discipline, and liturgy of the Anglican Church for permission to officiate

⁵³ David B. Kopel, ‘The Scottish and English Religious Roots of the American Rights to Arms: Buchanan, Rutherford, Locke, Sidney, and the Duty to Overthrow Tyranny’ in *Bridges* 12, nos. 3-4 (2005), p. 300.

weddings. However, by 1776, he left the Cape Fear area of North Carolina and moved to Guilford County after he received threats for prayers that supported the patriot cause. He served as the minister to Flora McDonald while she lived in North Carolina. Many of his parishioners served the British in the Cumberland County Loyalist Militia and fought against the Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia in the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge. After this battle, Loyalist support decreased, and many took an oath of allegiance to the patriot cause in Cumberland County in 1777-1778.⁵⁴ However, under the leadership of radical Presbyterians in the backcountry of North Carolina, the patriot cause flourished and promoted a rising flame of revolution.

The people of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina were proud of the images as ‘rebellious’ and ‘hostile’ and relished in the idea of being one of the first regions in the American colonies to call for independence. The radical Presbyterians in the backcountry of North Carolina were firmly rooted in their call for rebellion and revolution as evidenced with the instructions, their interconnections in covenant with one another, and their participation in the American Revolution. Many still celebrate this notion of Mecklenburg County being rebellious with the hornet’s nest being a symbol of pride as represented on the badge for local law enforcement and on the shield emblazoned on the doors of the fire engines. In addition, the Charlotte Hornets, the city of Charlotte’s professional basketball (NBA) franchise, carries this name due

⁵⁴ For further reading see, James McKenzie, ‘James Campbell’ in the *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 1. ed. William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), pp. 314-315; William Henry Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina, historical and biographical. Illustrative of the principles of a portion of her early settlers* (New York: Robert Carter, 1846), pp. 131-136; ‘Acts of the North Carolina General Assembly, 1777, *The State Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. XXIV, ed. Walter Clark (Goldsboro: Nash Brothers, 1905) pp. 9-12.

to this history. Likewise, the city's soccer club bears the name Charlotte Independence. Through this re-telling of North Carolina's contribution to the American Revolution, the identity of Scottish covenanting thought became prevalent to this county and one that played a part in establishing the greater identity of the region throughout western North Carolina.

Chapter 6 – Insurrection

Revolution Enacted in North Carolina

Shortly after news of the Battles in Lexington and Concord, the citizens in western North Carolina banded together in opposition to British rule. They drew on their Scottish covenanting tradition to support violent resistance and revolution against the British leaders before and during the War of Independence. This banding together as shown above demonstrated a clear connection of radical Presbyterian influence on the region. Previous chapters examined the justification for resistance theologically and the words that promoted covenanting ideas. This chapter focuses more on the radical Presbyterians' actions through brief case studies of a few skirmishes and battles of the American Revolution and examines the extent that they contributed to and participated in revolution against the British monarchy in the backcountry of North Carolina. As there is a limited amount of specific evidence through diaries, notes, or extant sermons, this chapter seeks to provide causal connections into the actions prompted by the radical Presbyterians of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. This became one of the first regions in the American colonies to call for independence and acted upon it. The issue that was once the concern of the Regulators in the western region of the North Carolina became a concern for the entire colony. The ministers led their communities from passive to active resistance. They justified it biblically as an act of defence against the magistrate who hanged six Regulators and who also demanded the other Regulators to swear allegiance to the crown. Through what some interpreted as the negligence of the magistrate's duty in protecting his subjects, the ministers encouraged their parishioners to renounce their loyalty to the crown. This

later prompted calls for independence. Many of these ministers paid significant costs for this as Alice Baldwin has pointed out that:

During the Revolutionary days these clergymen were regarded ... as dangerous and influential leaders, responsible for the spread of incendiary doctrines and for the people's stiff resistance to the crown. In consequence their homes and libraries were ruthlessly attacked and burned, and their lives endangered.¹

Although the initial insurrection from the Regulator Movement throughout the backcountry of North Carolina proved to be unsuccessful in achieving their initial demands, it proved vital in persuading many Presbyterian leaders to shift their views and join in the American Revolution.

The American Revolution

Some historians separate the Regulator Movement from the American Revolution since the Regulator Movement occurred between 1768 and 1771, whereas the American Revolution started in 1775. For example, Wayne Lee demonstrated the escalation of violence in the backcountry of North Carolina in his work, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina*, but he never made the distinct connection between the Regulator Movement and the American Revolution.² In a similar manner to the Regulator Movement, the American Revolution was primarily an economic and political insurrection. However, in the backcountry of North Carolina, especially for the residents in Mecklenburg County, the battles fought were for liberty against tyranny.

¹ Alice M. Baldwin, 'Sowers of Sedition: The Political Theories of Some of the New Light Presbyterian Clergy of Virginia and North Carolina' in *The William & Mary Quarterly* 5, no 1 (January 1948), p. 53.

² Wayne E. Lee, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina: The Culture of Violence in Riot and War* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001); Of this lacking connection, Lee received criticism: James C. Foley, review of *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina: The Culture of Violence in Riot and War*, by Wayne E. Lee, H-South, July 2002, <https://networks.h-net.org/node/512/reviews/664/foley-lee-crowds-and-soldiers-revolutionary-north-carolina-culture>

Statistical Analysis

Alan Watson wrote ‘who or what was responsible for organizing and converting the whig movement, whether psychologically, politically, or militarily, into a demand for independence? In North Carolina, the answer lay in the committees of safety – local grassroots organizations in the towns and counties’.³ Watson further pointed out that ‘the backcountry movement centered on Rowan, Mecklenburg, and Tryon Counties’.⁴ The committee of safety was a unique phenomenon throughout the Colonies during the American Revolution and played a vital role in the later establishment of a new government in the United States.⁵ The counties initially instituted committees of correspondence and inspection for the purposes of government and commerce. However, as the Revolution began, these became committees of safety for the purposes of protection of the local residents, enforcing laws established by the Continental Congress, and recruiting men for the patriot cause.⁶ T. H. Breen in his important work, *American Insurgents, American Patriots* described how the committees ‘possessed no constitutional legitimacy, the members of the local committees literally enforced the Revolution’.⁷ He further described how they:

... made key decisions on the local level about ideology and resistance, about accommodation and violence, which in this highly unstable political environment carried the force of law. And with increasing rigor they took it upon themselves to

³ Alan D. Watson, ‘The Committees of Safety and the Coming of the American Revolution in North Carolina, 1774-1776’, in *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. 73, no. 2, (April 1996), p. 132.

⁴ Watson, ‘The Committees of Safety and the Coming of the American Revolution in North Carolina, 1774-1776’, p. 138.

⁵ Bessie Lewis Whitaker, *The Provincial Council and Committees of Safety in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University Press, 1908).

⁶ Whitaker, *The Provincial Council and Committees of Safety in North Carolina*, pp. 6-11, 20-22 and Watson, ‘The Committees of Safety and the Coming of the American Revolution in North Carolina, 1774-1776’, pp. 132-143.

⁷ T. H. Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots: The Revolution of the People*, (New York: Hill and Wang, 2010), p. 162.

identify and punish persons deemed enemies of the country; they encouraged denunciations, often based on no more than personal animus and hearsay evidence. Moreover, these revolution bodies showed little patience for dissent.⁸

One example of this mob rule took place the evening after the passing of the Mecklenburg Resolves. The Committee of Safety in Mecklenburg County appointed Captain James Jack to carry the resolutions to Philadelphia. Along his journey, he stopped in Salisbury where William Kennon ‘read them aloud in court’. Two men in audience, attorneys John Dunn and Benjamin Booth Boote ‘pronounced the resolutions as treasonable, and said Captain Jack ought to be detained’.⁹ However, C. L. Hunter detailed the response others made to Dunn and Boote:

These individuals had previously expressed sentiments “inimical to the American cause”. As soon as knowledge of their avowed sentiments and proposed detention of Captain Jack reached Charlotte, the patriotic vigilance of the friends of liberty was actively aroused, and a party of ten or twelve armed horsemen promptly volunteered to proceed to Salisbury, arrest Dunn and Boote, bring them before the Committee of Safety of Mecklenburg for trial. This was accordingly done (George Graham, living near Charlotte, being one of the number), and both being found guilty of conduct inimical to the cause of American freedom, were transported, first to Camden, and afterward, to Charleston, S.C. They never returned to North Carolina.¹⁰

In Mecklenburg County, ‘the delegates appointed a committee’, as Francois-Xavier Martin wrote, ‘empowered to examine all persons brought before them charged with being inimical to the common cause’.¹¹ He later described the committee as producing ‘the zeal and unanimity for which the people of Mecklenburg were distinguished during the whole of the revolutionary war. They became united as a band of brothers,

⁸ Breen, *American Insurgents, American Patriots*, p. 162.

⁹ C.L. Hunter, *Sketches of western North Carolina, historical and biographical: illustrating principally the Revolutionary period of Mecklenburg, Rowan, Lincoln, and adjoining counties, accompanied with miscellaneous information, much of it never before published*, (Raleigh: The Raleigh News Steam Job Print, 1877), pp. 66-67.

¹⁰ Hunter, *Sketches of western North Carolina*, pp. 66-67.

¹¹ Francois-Xavier Martin, *The History of North Carolina, from the Earliest Period* (New Orleans: A.T. Penniman & Co., 1829), p. 376.

whose confidence in each other, and the cause, which they had sworn to support, was never shaken in the worst of times'.¹² However, their unity did not originate, nor was it sustained by the committee, but through their connections and relationships in the local Presbyterian churches. Through this establishment of authority within Mecklenburg County, they had the collective representative authority to resist the lesser magistrates as laid out previously by James Stewart and Alexander Shields.¹³ Shields, referring to *Jus Populi* set out just cause for defensive war 'if a King will alienate & subject his Kingdom, without his Subjects consent, or be carried with a hostile mind to the destruction of his people, his Kingdom is actually lost, and the people may not only Lawfully resist, but also depose him'.¹⁴

In order to set a firm foundation for understanding the role that radical Presbyterians played, historical context requires statistical analysis of the participants. Data compiled and analysed can be mundane but provides a fuller context and interpretation. Before compiling the data, I sought to define the best way to exemplify who were the active participants from Mecklenburg County and determined the best course was to analyse the members of the Committee of Safety of Mecklenburg County as the test case.¹⁵

¹² Martin, *The History of North Carolina*, p. 376.

¹³ James Stewart, *Jus populi vindicatum, or, The peoples right to defend themselves and their covenanted religion vindicated wherein the act of defence and vindication which was interprised anno 1666 is particularly justified ... being a reply to the first part of Survey of Naphtaly &c. / by a friend to true Christian liberty* (London: s.n., 1669) and Alexander Shields, *A Hind Let Loose, or, An historical representation of the testimonies of the Church of Scotland for the interest of Christ with the true state thereof in all its periods : together with a vindication of the present testimonie, against the Popish, prelatical, & malignant enemies of that church ... : wherein several controversies of greatest consequence are enquired into, and in some measure cleared, concerning hearing of the curats, owning of the present tyrannie, taking of ensnaring oaths & bonds, frequenting of field meetings, defensive resistance of tyrannical violence ... / by a lover of true liberty*, (np, 1687).

¹⁴ Shields, *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 591.

¹⁵ This requires additional research on the specific soldiers and their contributions to the Revolution, but this was outside the scope of the thesis. This may prove to be a focus for later research and

As shown above, there were at least thirty-two members of the Mecklenburg County Committee of Safety.¹⁶ When compiling and analysing the database, a few questions arose. For example, of the members of the Committee, how many attended a Presbyterian Church? If they attended a Presbyterian Church, how many attended one of the 'Seven Sisters'? In addition, apart from their connections through their church membership, what were their relationships with one another? What role did they play in the committee? Were they educated? Did they join the recently established militia? Did they actually serve with the militia? Did they fight in any nearby battles of the American Revolution? These are only a few of the questions asked while compiling this database. Additional questions require asking and answering, but this chapter does not address all of them. The focus remained specific to the committee members' connections and participation in order to give a sample of the influence and contribution of covenanting thought to the American Revolution in the backcountry of North Carolina.

Regarding the question of their membership and involvement in the Presbyterian Church or the 'Seven Sisters', Presbyterians made up the majority of the committee. Those who were members of a Presbyterian Church made up 88% of the committee. Of the twenty-eight committee members who were Presbyterian, twenty-seven were members of one of the seven sister churches. (See Fig. 1) In addition, of the twenty-eight Presbyterians, eleven served as elders with their churches. This represented just

publication. For the sake of this thesis, I focused more specifically on the leadership of the county and their larger influence both in the committee and their churches.

¹⁶ See Table 5 in the Appendix. For a complete list of the texts used, please see footnote 39 on page 97.

shy of 40% of the members of the Committee who were not only Presbyterians, but also served as leaders and influencers within their churches.



Fig. 1 – Percentage of Committee Members in the Presbyterian Church and Number who were members of ‘Seven Sisters’

Although many connected to one another through their church membership, a number further linked together through familial relationships. For example, John McKnitt and Hezekiah Alexander were brothers, and the remaining Alexanders, Abraham, Adam, Charles, and Ezra were their cousins. Abraham and Ezra were also brothers as well as being uncles to Adam and Charles, who were brothers. All the Alexanders who participated in the committee of safety were descendants of Joseph Alexander and originated from Cecil County, Maryland.¹⁷ Likewise, two of the three Grahams in the committee were brothers, as were the Polks. Marriage proved to be another example of familial relationships within the committee. For example, Thomas Polk was Ephraim Brevard’s father-in-law as well as John Davidson was Joseph Graham’s father-in-law.¹⁸ These connections, whether through churches or families, promoted a greater sense of unity in the American cause.

¹⁷ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, pp. 203-210; J. B. Alexander, *The History of Mecklenburg County from 1740 to 1900*, (Charlotte, NC: Observer Printing House, 1902), pp. 78-85; Mrs. Benjamin W. Ingraham, ‘The Six Alexanders Who Signed the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence: A Genealogy Compiled by Descendants’ in *Daughters of the American Revolution Magazine*, vol. 86, (March 1952), pp. 311-315.

¹⁸ George W. Graham, *The Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence May 20, 1775 and the lives of its signers*, (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1905), p. 104 and William A. Graham, *General Joseph Graham and his papers on North Carolina Revolutionary History* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1904), pp. 166, 173-174.

Many played a much larger role, not only within the committee, but also for the influence of the residents in Mecklenburg County. The greatest factor for most of these men's appointments to the committee was through their wealth. Many were wealthy landowners and had the financial capital to support the Revolution. One example of this was Thomas Polk, the largest landowner in Mecklenburg County.¹⁹ In addition to their financial wealth, they influenced others with their knowledge and learning as four of the members were graduates of the College of New Jersey, and seven received their education at the local Queen's College. Beyond serving in various roles on behalf of the committee, the majority served in the county militia.

The committee of safety's primary purpose through the Mecklenburg Resolves was the establishment of a militia for Mecklenburg County. Because of their standing in and around Charlotte, a significant number of the committee members (84%) joined in the American Cause. This equated to twenty-seven of the thirty-two joining in the militia. In addition, just over 62%, which were twenty of the twenty-seven committee members specifically joined the 1st Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia. The remaining seven joined other militias in the region, such as Clear Creek, Jones County, and the 1st North Carolina Regiment. It is important to note that of the twenty-seven of the committee members who served in the military, twenty-three were Presbyterian. This calculated to approximately 85% of those who served were Presbyterian. (See Fig. 2) There were sixteen officers in the committee of safety of which all were Presbyterian but one. Abraham Alexander, Richard Barry, Robert

¹⁹ Hugh F. Rankin, 'Polk, Thomas' in *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 5, ed. William S. Powell, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), pp. 112-113; and Hunter, *Sketches of western North Carolina*, pp. 54-57.

Irwin, and Zaccheus Wilson, who served as officers in the militia, also served as elders in their churches. Although they joined the militia, the question remained; did they serve in the American cause? Moreover, did they fight in any battles of the American Revolution? The answer to both questions is yes.



Fig. 2 – Percentage of Committee Members who joined 1st Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia and the percentage who were Presbyterian

For the purposes of this database, the primary battles mentioned were the battles of Moores Creek Bridge, Ramsour's Mill, Charlotte, McIntyre's Farm, and Kings Mountain.²⁰ Of the twenty-seven who served, eighteen participated or fought in the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge. The other battles combined had the participation of twelve men, five in the Battle of Ramsour's Mill, one in the Battle of McIntyre's Farm, three in the Battle of Charlotte, and three in the Battle of Kings Mountain. Adam Alexander participated in more battles than the other members of the committee. He fought in the battles of Moores Creek Bridge, Ramsour's Mill, and Kings Mountain. Conversely, of all the men who served, although he had the title of colonel, this database lacked evidence regarding the service of William Kennon.

²⁰ See Table 5 in the Appendix for the complete analysis of the battles listed. There were additional battles listed in the texts, such as Cowan's Ford and the Cherokee Expedition.

Adding to the analysis provided above, the remainder of this chapter seeks to demonstrate further the roles that Presbyterian parishioners and elders played in the promotion of insurrection against the British crown.

1st Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia

Just as words prompted rebellion, so too did the action of a few radical Presbyterians throughout the backcountry of North Carolina. As proven above, many joined the 1st Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia for the American cause. The Mecklenburg Committee of Safety formed a militia regiment on the same day of the Mecklenburg Resolves, 31 May 1775, where the fourth resolution stated:

That the Inhabitants of this County do meet on a certain Day appointed by this Committee, and having formed themselves into nine Companies, to wit, eight for the County, and one for the Town of Charlotte, do choose a Colonel and other military Officers, who shall hold and exercise their several Powers by Virtue of this Choice, and *independent* of Great-Britain, and former Constitution of this Province.²¹

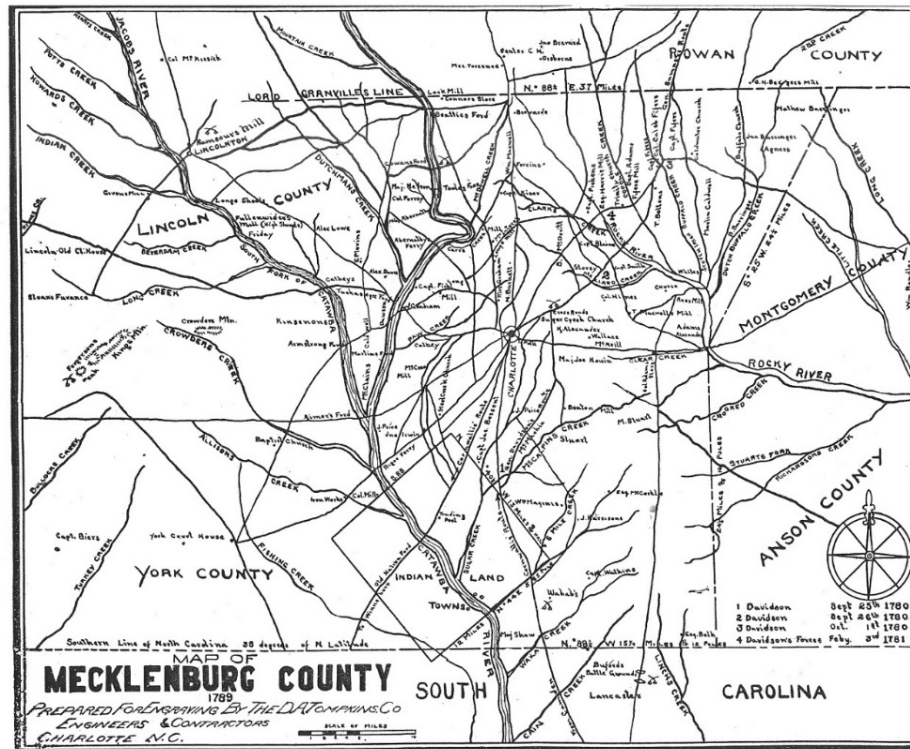
The Committee of Safety and militia were made up of a number of men from the ‘Seven Sisters’ and went on to fight in a number of battles throughout North and South Carolina.²² This regiment was active until the end of the war making it one of the longest established militias in North Carolina during the American Revolution.²³ This chapter cannot adequately show the contributions of this militia in all of the battles, but rather will examine a few to show the larger influence to the others and ultimately to the greater American Revolution. Therefore, this chapter will briefly

²¹ ‘Mecklenburg Committee Resolves [as printed in the South-Carolina Gazette, and Country Journal of 13th June 1775], 31 May 1775’, in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. IX, ed. William L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1886), p. 1282. [Afterwards Mecklenburg Resolves]

²² National Society Daughter of the American Revolution of North Carolina, *Roster of Soldiers from North Carolina in the American Revolution*, (Durham, NC: The Seeman Press, 1932), pp. 496-497.

²³ Graham, *General Joseph Graham and his papers*, pp. 26.

examine five battles fought during the American Revolution, one in the eastern portion of the Old North State, and the other four fought in the western backcountry of North Carolina. (See Map 1)



Original Map from which this was compiled bore this inscription:-

*"A plan of Mecklenburg and portion of
joining Counties
is laid down by a scale of five miles an inch
January 16, 1789 By Maj Joseph Graham"*

Map 1, 'A plan of Mecklenburg and portion of joining Counties is laid down by a scale of five miles to an inch. 16 January 1789 by Maj. Joseph Graham.'²⁴

The Battle of Moores Creek Bridge (27 February 1776)

The first notable and influential battle in North Carolina was at the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge.²⁵ This battle was the first victory for the American Patriots against the

²⁴ Graham, *General Joseph Graham and his papers*, p. 188. This map details the various battles in the region with an image of crossed sabres. (Left centre shows the Battle of Kings Mountain, Top Left shows the Battle of Ramsour's Mill, top centre shows the Battle of Cowan's Ford, and centre just right of Charlotte, shows the Crossroads Skirmish near Sugar Creek Church.)

²⁵ For a detailed list of the soldiers who fought in this battle, please see Bobby Gilmer Moss, *Roster of the Patriots in the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge*, (Blacksburg, SC: Scotia-Hibernia Press, 1992).

British in the American Revolution. According to the National Park Service, this battle also proved to be ‘the last broadsword charge by Scottish Highlanders’.²⁶ This battle took place approximately 180 miles from Charlotte in the Cape Fear region of Eastern North Carolina. As a battle, it was insignificant in size, but its influence proved to be momentous in turning Loyalists in North Carolina to the American cause and in prohibiting others from joining the Loyalist cause altogether.

Governor Josiah Martin convinced the British government officials that he could raise an army of over 3,000 Loyalists throughout North Carolina.²⁷ This proved to be costly. Unbeknownst to Martin, leading up to the Battle of Moores Creek, several men throughout this region of Cumberland County formed a group later known as ‘The Association’. These fifty-four men, in response to the news of the outbreak of conflict with the British in the Battles of Lexington and Concord, resolved that:

The actual commencement of hostilities against the Continent, by the British Troops, in the bloody scene on the nineteenth of April last, near Boston, the increase of arbitrary impositions, from a wicked and despotic Ministry, and the dread of instigated insurrections in the colonies, are causes sufficient to drive an oppressed people to the use of arms: We, therefore, the subscribers, of Cumberland County, holding ourselves bound by that most sacred of all obligations, the duty of citizens towards an injured country, and thoroughly convinced that, under our distressed circumstances, we shall be justified in resisting force by force, do unite ourselves under every tie of religion and honor, and associate as a band in her defence against every foe, hereby solemnly engaging, that, whenever our continental or provincial

²⁶ ‘Moores Creek National Battlefield (US National Park Service)’, National Park Service, <<https://www.nps.gov/mocr/index.htm>>.

²⁷ Hugh F. Rankin, *North Carolina in the American Revolution*, (Raleigh: Division of Archives and History North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1959), pp. 11-12; Theodore P. Savas and J. David Dameron, *A Guide to the Battles of the American Revolution*, (New York: Savas Beatie, LLC, 2006), p. 37; David Lee Russell, *The American Revolution in the Southern Colonies*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc. Publishers, 2000), pp. 78-82; J. D. Lewis, *NC Patriots 1775-1783: Their Own Words*, Volume 1 (Little River, SC: eBook by Author, 2012), p. 7-15; Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, p. 143-144; and John Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford House: The American Revolution in the Carolinas*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1997), p. 4.

councils shall decree it necessary, we will go forth and be ready to sacrifice our lives and fortunes to secure her freedom and safety. This obligation to continue in full force until a reconciliation shall take place between Great Britain and America, upon constitutional principles, an event we most ardently desire, and we will hold all those persons inimical to the liberty of the colonies, who shall refuse to subscribe to this association; and we will in all things follow the advice of our general committee respecting the purpose aforesaid, the preservation of peace and good order, and the safety of individual and private property.²⁸

These men were able to garner additional support for the Patriots. Eight members of the Association joined the American cause and participated in the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge. The sentiment from the Association was prevalent throughout this region and proved to be vital for the American Patriots. Equally important was the enormous support this region received from militias throughout all of North Carolina, especially from the western backcountry.

Leading up to the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge, several of the American Patriots answered the call to come to the aid of Colonel Richard Caswell and his militia. Historians agree that there were approximately 1,600 Loyalist troops and 1,000 – 1,100 Patriot troops.²⁹ Over 133 companies of American militias responded to the call, but a number of these did not actually make it in time for the battle itself. Twenty-three of the thirty-five counties in North Carolina came to the battle, and the 1st and 2nd Battalions of Salisbury District Militiamen represented western North Carolina, with regiments from the counties of Mecklenburg, Guilford, Tryon, Surry, Rowan, and Anson.

²⁸ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, pp. 142-143. These later became known as the Liberty Point Resolves.

²⁹ Savas and Dameron, *A Guide to the Battles of the American Revolution*, p. 36; Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford House*, p. 4; and J. D. Lewis argued that there was potentially over 3,300 Patriots that ‘gathered at and around’ Moores Creek Bridge, J. D. Lewis, *NC Patriots 1775-1783: Their Own Words*, Volume 1 (Little River, SC: eBook by Author, 2012), p. 13.

Specific to the 1st Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia, twelve men who were members of the Committee of Safety for Mecklenburg County led others to the Battle at Moores Creek Bridge and eleven of the twelve participated in the signing of the Mecklenburg Resolves. Of these twelve men, all who signed the resolves attended one of the ‘Seven Sisters’ in Mecklenburg County. The one participant who did not attend these churches, nor sign was Captain James Jack, who attended Thyatira (Presbyterian) Church led by Samuel McCorkle, a prominent Presbyterian leader discussed further in the subsequent chapter. All were ardent supporters of the covenanting ideology and through their leadership and participation in this battle; these men put their ideas to action. This battle took place early in the war and played a significant role in reducing the spread of Loyalism. The remaining four battles examined all took place within 4 months in 1780, and all were near to Charlotte, North Carolina.

The Battle of Ramsour’s Mill (20 June 1780)

This first of the battles examined near Charlotte was at the Battle of Ramsour’s Mill. This battle took place approximately thirty-five miles from Charlotte in a town now known as Lincolnton, North Carolina. ‘This battle is but little known in history’, according to William A. Graham, ‘yet is one of the most important in results and best fought of the Revolution’.³⁰ Graham, who served on the Committee of Safety in Mecklenburg County further noted that ‘Ramsaur’s (*sic*) Mill was the first and most important “act” in King’s Mountain. It destroyed Toryism in that section and caused

³⁰ William A. Graham, ‘The Battle of Ramsaur’s Mill’ in *The North Carolina Booklet*, vol. 4, no. 2 (June 1904), p. 20.

Bryan, with his followers, to leave the “forks of the Yadkin” and not return until Cornwallis came’.³¹ As one who fought in the battle, Graham clearly had an elevated view of this battle, but in a small measure he was correct. This battle proved to be pivotal in the promotion of revolution.

Just as the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge dispelled Loyalists in joining the British cause in the eastern region of North Carolina, the American victory at the Battle of Ramsour’s Mill had a similar affect in the western region of North Carolina. For example, Graham wrote, ‘Cornwallis marched through this country the following January and camped at Ramsaur’s (*sic*) Mill. He lost more by desertion than he gained in recruits’.³² Another similarity to the Battle of Moores Creek Bridge, the American Patriots were outnumbered. Rather than being outnumbered by 500-600 men, the Loyalists outnumbered the Patriots by over three to one. Graham, in his memoir, noted:

I do not think, in killed and wounded, in proportion to numbers engaged, the battle is equalled in the Revolution. Forty killed and one hundred wounded, out of four hundred engaged, is high class ... The defeat and rout of three times their number is certainly worthy of note.³³

Furthermore, the Battle of Ramsour’s Mill proved to be influential in the later battle of Kings Mountain and the victory that the American Patriots had there. William Richardson Davie wrote ““that district of country lying between the Catawba River, the mountains” and the South Carolina line “was entirely cleared of the enemy””.³⁴

³¹ Graham, ‘The Battle of Ramsaur’s Mill’, p. 21.

³² Graham, ‘The Battle of Ramsaur’s Mill’, p. 21.

³³ Graham, ‘The Battle of Ramsaur’s Mill’, p. 21.

³⁴ Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford House*, p. 110. Here, Buchanan quoted William Richardson Davie, *The Revolutionary War Sketches of William R. Davie*, ed. Blackwell P. Robinson, (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives & History, 1976), p. 8.

Lyman C. Draper, in his notable text on the Battle of Kings Mountain noted how the British were ‘signally defeated, in June, at Ramsour’s Mill, and Bryan and his followers subsequently driven from the country’.³⁵ Due to these diminished numbers of Loyalist and British forces in the region, the Battle of Kings Mountain later proved to be vital to the American cause and discussed further below.

Specific to the participants from the Committee of Safety and the 1st Mecklenburg Regiment of Militia, as mentioned previously, five of the members of the committee participated in the battle, Ezra and Adam Alexander, William Graham, James Harris, and John Davidson. Davidson was born in the Middle Octorara Settlement in Pennsylvania in 1735 and raised under the fiery leadership and influence of Alexander Craighead. He, along with his family, journeyed the Great Wagon Road to Mecklenburg County, North Carolina bringing with them the Scottish covenanting tradition. Likewise, a further example of the familial connections with the members of the committee, Davidson’s daughter Margaret married James Harris with whom he fought alongside in the Battle of Ramsour’s Mill.³⁶ Also, Graham furthered noted how the Battle of Ramsour’s Mill proved to be ‘a fair sample of the conduct of the Mecklenburg and Rowan militia in the Revolution. They would answer all calls to fight, but when the battle was over, or while preparation was being made, they declined to undergo the wearisomeness of camp-life’.³⁷ While each of these battles took place, the men of this region returned to their homes and continued to support

³⁵ Lyman C. Draper, *King’s Mountain and its Heroes: History of the Battle of King’s Mountain, October 7th, 1780, and the events which led to it*, (Johnson City, TN: The Overmountain Press, 1881), p. 78. The ‘Bryan’ mentioned referred to Colonel Samuel Bryan who led British Forces.

³⁶ Chalmers G. Davidson, ‘Davidson, John’ in *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 2, ed. William S. Powell, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), pp. 24-25.

³⁷ Graham, ‘The Battle of Ramsaur’s Mill’, pp. 22-23.

their families and churches. This also permitted them with the quickness to respond to other nearby battles, especially the Battle of Charlotte.

The Battle of Charlotte (26 September 1780)

Of all the battles discussed, this was the smallest in scale, but still proved to be noteworthy for the region. Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton began chapter three of his *A History of the Campaigns in 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Provinces of North America* detailing the movement of the King's forces into 'Charlotte town' and wrote:

The immediate advance of the King's troops into North Carolina would undoubtedly, at this critical period, have been productive of various and important advantages. The appearance of the royal forces, after such brilliant success, would have animated their friends, discouraged their enemies, and continued the confusion and disruption of the American army. But however useful and beneficial such an expedition might have proved, many material requisites and necessary arrangements were not in convenient state or sufficient forwardness to warrant the undertaking.³⁸

On the 22nd of September, he noted that 'Earl Cornwallis directed the British legion and light infantry to cross the Catawba [River] at Blair's ford, in order to form the advance guard, for the immediate possession of Charlotte Town'. Yet, due to illness, they delayed in their advance against Charlotte. He later noted that 'Charlotte town afforded some conveniences, blended with great disadvantages'.³⁹ One such disadvantage noted was how the:

town and environs abounded with inveterate enemies; the plantations in the neighbourhood were small and uncultivated; the roads narrow, and crossed in every direction; and the whole face of the country covered with close and thick woods. In

³⁸ Lieutenant-Colonel Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781, in the Southern Provinces of North America*, (London: T. Cadell, 1787), p. 155.

³⁹ Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781*, pp. 158-159.

addition to these, disadvantages, no estimation can be made of the sentiments of half the inhabitants of North Carolina, whilst the royal army remained at Charlotte town.⁴⁰

It was during this time that General Cornwallis purportedly made the famous declaration referring to Charlotte, North Carolina as ‘the “most rebellious” section in America’. Tarleton further described the area that ‘It is evident, and it had been frequently mentioned to the King’s officers, that the counties of Mecklenburg and Rowan were more hostile to England than any others in America’.⁴¹

Specifically pertaining to the Battle of Charlotte, Tarleton noted in his memoir that Cornwallis ordered the capture of Charlotte on 22nd September, but he was unable to lead the charge into Charlotte because ‘a violent fever which had attacked Lieutenant-colonel Tarleton, and which yet disabled him from holding his situation when his regiment moved forwards’.⁴² As few days later, Major George Hanger joined with Cornwallis and led the charge into Charlotte. Tarleton described the event:

Earl Cornwallis moved forwards as soon as the legion under Major Hanger joined him. A party of militia fired at the advanced dragoons and light infantry as they entered the town, and a more considerable body appeared drawn up near the court house. The conduct of the Americans created suspicion in the British ... A charge of cavalry, under Major Hanger, dissipated this ill-grounded jealousy, and totally dispersed the militia.⁴³

Tarleton’s description accurately noted the British victory over the militia near the court house, and his description of the region proved to be equally precise. Tarleton noted that ‘the vigilance and animosity of these surrounding districts checked the exertions of the well affected, and totally destroyed all communication between the

⁴⁰ Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781*, p. 160.

⁴¹ Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns in 1780 and 1781*, pp. 85 & 160.

⁴² Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781*, p. 159.

⁴³ Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781*, p. 159.

King's troops and the loyalists in the other parts of the province'.⁴⁴ This was a resilient region and exemplified in the leadership of Captain Joseph Graham and William Richardson Davie.⁴⁵

Graham served on the Committee of Safety in Mecklenburg County. He too, had extensive knowledge and training in the covenanting tradition. He was born in 1759 in Chester County, Pennsylvania near the Middle Octorara Region.⁴⁶ Like others from this region, his family moved down to Mecklenburg County in the mid-1760s. Furthermore, he attended the Queen's Museum and was a member of Sugar Creek Church under the leadership of Alexander Craighead and Joseph Alexander, who was an ardent supporter of covenanting thought and the founder of Queen's Museum. William Graham provided a detailed account of Joseph Graham's participation in the battle:

As Captain Graham was engaged in a hand-to-hand fight, his horse backed under a limb of a tree which knocked him off. He received three bullets in the thigh, one saber thrust in the side, one cut on the back of the neck and four upon his forehead. And from one of these some of his brains exuded ... Such a blow, those who have had experience in saber fighting know, could not be dealt by one mounted man upon another. Later, upon retiring, as they passed him, one of the British aimed his pistol at him with intent to shoot. Major Hanger said, "Put up your pistol; save your ammunition he has enough." Thus was his life preserved.⁴⁷

Graham after recovery later served through autumn of 1781.⁴⁸ Graham clearly typified the passion and tenacity for liberty within covenanting thought in the Battle of Charlotte and his continued participation in the American cause. Joseph's brother,

⁴⁴ Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781*, p. 160.

⁴⁵ For additional detail pertaining to the Battle of Charlotte, see Graham, *General Joseph Graham and his papers*, pp. 61-67; 241-258. Further details regarding Davie provided in chapter seven below.

⁴⁶ Graham, *General Joseph Graham and his papers*, p. 36.

⁴⁷ Graham, *General Joseph Graham and his papers*, p. 65.

⁴⁸ Graham, *General Joseph Graham and his papers*, p. 44.

George further epitomised the Scottish covenanting tradition with his participation in the American Revolution as seen in the Battle of McIntyre's Farm.

The Battle of McIntyre's Farm (3 October 1780)

The Battle of McIntyre's Farm was one of some humour, but also served as an important demonstration of the perseverance of the militia in Mecklenburg County.

Tarleton wrote:

Notwithstanding the different checks and losses sustained by the militia of the district, they continued their hostilities with unwearied perseverance; and the British troops were so effectually blockaded in their present position, that very few, out of a great number of messengers, could reach Charlotte town in the beginning of October, to give intelligence of Ferguson's situation.⁴⁹

This was a brilliant battle of guerrilla warfare. The citizens of the area were so familiar with the landscape that they used it to their advantage. Tarleton expressed his annoyance and wrote that the foraging parties were every day harassed by the inhabitants, who did not remain home, to receive payment for the produce of their plantations, but generally fired from covert places, to annoy the British detachments. As mentioned previously, some likened this annoyance from the inhabitants to a 'hornet's nest of rebellion'. This annoyance proved prophetic in a small measure as some referred to this battle as the Battle of the Bees or 'the "Hornets" at work'.⁵⁰

The battle took place near the Hopewell community within Mecklenburg County. For the British, their forces were over 450 men, 60 cavalrymen, and about 40 wagons sent out by Cornwallis to forage and collect supplies for the British that remained in

⁴⁹ Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781*, p. 160.

⁵⁰ Hunter, *Sketches of western North Carolina*, p. 136.

Charlotte. However, for the Patriots, the numbers were very small with only 14 men. During the pillaging, one of the British soldiers accidentally knocked over some beehives and immediately attacked by swarming bees. Because this distracted the British men, the Patriots attacked, killing eight and causing the British to retreat into Charlotte. With the help of familiarity with the landscape and some bees, the Battle of McIntyre's Farm was a patriot victory.⁵¹ As seen with the previous battles, men who served on the Committee of Safety in Mecklenburg County actively participated in the battles near Charlotte, and one such man in this battle was George Graham. Like Joseph, George was born in Chester County, PA and moved with his family to Mecklenburg County. He also attended Queen's Museum and Sugar Creek Church. The Grahams were very proud of their Scottish heritage. They were very honoured descendants of the 1st Marquess of Montrose, James Graham who, although he initially signed the National Covenant in Scotland in 1638, later supported Charles I in the Wars of the Three Kingdoms.⁵² This battle later served a larger purpose in prohibiting supplies and additional British forces to aid the men preparing to fight in the Battle of Kings Mountain on 7 October 1780.

The Battle of Kings Mountain (7 October 1780)

Considered by some to be one of the most important turning points in the American Revolution, the Battle of Kings Mountain was a clash between Loyalist and Patriot militias.⁵³ Thomas Jefferson in a letter to John Campbell concerning the Battle of

⁵¹ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, pp. 506-507.

⁵² Graham, *General Joseph Graham and his papers*, pp. 9-11 & 25.

⁵³ For the complete details of the Battle of Kings Mountain, the most celebrate account is Draper, *King's Mountain and its Heroes*; More recently, see Robert M. Dunkerly, *The Battle of Kings Mountain: Eyewitness Accounts, The Battle that Turned the Tide of the American Revolution*, (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2007) and Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse*, pp. 225-241.

Kings Mountain wrote, 'I remember well the deep and grateful impression made on the mind of every one by that memorable victory – it was the joyful annunciation of that *turn of the tide of success which terminated the revolutionary war*, with the seal of our independence'.⁵⁴ Tarleton in his memoir concerning the battle wrote:

The destruction of Ferguson and his corps marked the period and the extent of the first expedition into North Carolina. Added to the depression and fear it communicated to the loyalists upon the borders, and to the southward, the effect of such an important event was sensibly felt by Earl Cornwallis at Charlotte town. The weakness of his army, the extent and poverty in North Carolina, the want of knowledge of his enemy's designs, and the total ruin of his militia, presented a gloomy prospect at the commencement of the campaign... he therefore formed a sudden determination to quit Charlotte town, and pass the Catawba river.⁵⁵

In comparison to the previous battles examined, this was by far the largest to occur in this region with over 1,000 Loyalist and over 1,500 American militiamen.⁵⁶ Uniquely, this was a battle between militias and not regular soldiers. The battle took place approximately 42 miles southwest of Charlotte in South Carolina just over the North Carolina border.

Three members of the Committee of Safety were officers who purportedly fought in the Battle of Kings Mountain, Adam Alexander, William Graham, and Zaccheus Wilson.⁵⁷ Each was active in one of the seven sister churches and two served as elders

⁵⁴ 'From Thomas Jefferson to John Campbell, 10 November 1822', *Founders Online*, National Archives, last modified June 29, 2017, <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-3152>. [emphasis mine]

⁵⁵ Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781*, p. 166.

⁵⁶ For a complete detailed list of the Patriot participants in the Battle of Kings Mountain, please see Bobby Gilmer Moss, *The Patriots at Kings Mountain*, (Blacksburg, SC: Scotia-Hibernia Press, 1990).

⁵⁷ According to Moss, none of the pension applications exists for these two; See Moss, *The Patriots of Kings Mountain*, pp. 280-291. For each, there are secondary sources that asserted their involvement in the battle. For Zaccheus Wilson, see John Douglas, *The History of Steele Creek Presbyterian Church, 1745-1978: Mecklenburg County, Charlotte, North Carolina* (Charlotte, NC: Craftsman Printing and Publishing House, 1978), p. 32.

in their churches.⁵⁸ According to J. D. Lewis, Zaccheus Wilson led a company with the 1st Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia under Lt. Col. Matthew Brandon.⁵⁹ Wilson, like the other Patriots listed above was an ardent supporter of liberty and well-versed in all matters of Scottish covenanting thought. ‘The Wilsons’ as C.L. Hunter described ‘were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, and were arrayed by early education, civil and religious, against tyranny in any form’.⁶⁰

As noted in the introduction, this region in North Carolina, especially Mecklenburg County did not become a ‘rebellious’ and ‘hostile’ region overnight. As evidenced through the examination of the Regulator Movement and various battles of the American Revolution, the Patriots in western North Carolina drew on the Scottish covenanting tradition to support violent resistance to British rule. For example, ‘Under the teachings of Craighead’, Charles Hanna wrote ‘it is not strange that these people should be among the first to conceive the idea of Independence, to announce it to the world in their convention held in May 1775, and with their fortunes and lives to sustain that idea through the trying scenes of the Revolution’.⁶¹ Joseph Trinterud criticised Hanna and wrote that ‘the simple assumptions often made that the Presbyterians were colonial patriots because they were Scotch-Irish in origin is not borne out by a study of the period’.⁶² Yet, the Scottish covenanting political theology of the radical Presbyterians was prevalent in the region in the height of the American

⁵⁸ See Table 5 in the Appendix

⁵⁹ J. D. Lewis, *NC Patriots 1775-1783: Their Own Words*, Volume 2, part 1, (Little River, SC: eBook by Author, 2012), p. 856

⁶⁰ Douglas, *The History of Steele Creek Presbyterian Church*, p. 32 and Hunter, *Sketches of Western North Carolina*, p. 57.

⁶¹ Charles A. Hanna, *The Scotch-Irish, or The Scot in North Britain, North Ireland, and North America*, vol. II, (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1902), pp. 42-43.

⁶² Leonard J. Trinterud, *The Forming of an American Tradition: A Re-examination of Colonial Presbyterianism*, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1949), p. 246.

Revolution. As shown above, the radical Presbyterian ideas became action as many supported and participated in the Regulator Movement and the later skirmishes and battles of the American Revolution. Although the evidence points to the leadership more than the soldiers specifically, one can surmise through these causal connections that the influence of the local Presbyterian churches, ministers, and elders encouraged others to participate actively in the Revolution. The dots are further connected in the following chapter.

Chapter 7 – Instruction

Reform Established through Education and Government

The American Covenanters in the backcountry of North Carolina, like the Scottish Covenanters placed a high calling upon the social institutions of learning and government. The influence that the Presbyterian Church had on the representative notion of government within the colonial context came about through the Presbyterians' high view of education. Joseph Tiedemann summarised the remarkable efficiency of the 'Presbyterian Organization' and pointed to the founding of The College of New Jersey as playing a substantial role in bringing the Presbyterians together and 'extending their influence'.¹ Evidence abounds regarding the Presbyterian influence on resistance in both Scotland and America, but the Covenanters' interpretation regarding the relationship between education and government remains lacking. The primary aim of this chapter is to study the institutions of education and government and examine the extent covenanting thought contributed to the relationship between education and government in the backcountry of North Carolina.

'Every child has the right to a Christian Education'

Education and the high calling of knowledge and learning were vital within covenanting thought. The rapid migration of a considerable number of Scots-Irish in the colonies prompted a high demand for educated ministers.² Further complicating

¹ Joseph S. Tiedemann, 'Presbyterianism and the American Revolution in the middle colonies' in *Church History* 74, no 2 (June 1, 2005), pp. 337-338.

² For a detailed commentary concerning the disparity in the number of Scottish and Scots-Irish migrants, see David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 608-612, see footnotes 7-10 & 13 on pages 608-610.

this problem was the fact that many of the new Presbyterians were scattered throughout the backcountry.³ For the Covenanters in Scotland and America, education was paramount for one to have a proper sense of their calling or vocation in order to contribute to the industry of society. Alan Heimert noted that education, ‘particularly that of the common schools, was one plank in the Calvinist platform for promoting the happiness of the American people’.⁴ The American Covenanters followed in Knox’s tradition and achieved this through three primary means: catechism, higher public education, and university education.

Leading up to and during the founding years of America, the people throughout North Carolina, regardless of their beliefs, certainly felt the influence of men such as Alexander Craighead, Hugh McAden, Henry Pattillo, David Caldwell, Joseph Alexander, and Samuel McCorkle. A leading means of their influence, beyond the pulpit was through education. Each of these men demonstrated a philosophy of education that descended directly from the Presbyterian tradition. A comparative similarity of education between Scotland and North Carolina existed throughout the period during and shortly after the American Revolution, thus demonstrating the contribution that Scottish covenanting thought had upon North Carolina during in this period.

Before looking to education specifically in North Carolina, two men outside of North Carolina require further examination – Samuel Davies and John Witherspoon. Previous histories overlooked the significance and influence these two men had upon

³ Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, pp. 721-727.

⁴ Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), p. 49.

North Carolina's education. For example, while serving as president at the College of New Jersey, Davies mentored Pattillo, Alexander, and Caldwell, while Witherspoon during his presidency mentored McCorkle. Coupled with their enthusiasm for education, they shared ministerial duties as Davies supported Craighead when both served as leaders of the Hanover Presbytery. Likewise, Davies signed the license for ministry for Pattillo who later preached the ordination sermons for Alexander and Caldwell. Davies and Witherspoon were staunch Presbyterians, and both were important in the progress of covenanting thought in the American colonies.

Samuel Davies, although Welsh by heritage, was an ardent Presbyterian and aptly named the 'apostle of dissent'.⁵ He served the Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania and later moved to Virginia to serve as minister and moderator of the Hanover Presbytery until he took up the presidency at the College of New Jersey. He served as the fourth president of the College of New Jersey (1759-1761), where he raised the standards for admission and for the bachelor's degree. 'Davies left his mark as scholar and patriot on his student', as Alexander Leitch noted, 'particularly the eleven members of the class of 1760 whom he taught as seniors... Among the eleven were a member of the Continental Congress, chaplains in the Continental Army, judges in Maine and Pennsylvania, *the founder of a college in North Carolina*, a member of the United States House of Representatives, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence'.⁶ Davies, although indirectly, played a significant role in the influence

⁵ George William Pilcher bestowed the title on him. See George William Pilcher, *Samuel Davies: Apostle of Dissent in Colonial Virginia*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1978).

⁶ Alexander Leitch, 'Samuel Davies' in *A Princeton Companion*, ed. Alexander Leitch (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978) [accessed online: http://etcweb.princeton.edu/CampusWWW/Companion/davies_samuel.html] *italics mine*. This founder of a college in North Carolina was Joseph Alexander who founded the Queen's Museum in Charlotte, North Carolina in 1771, which was the first college south of Virginia.

of the North Carolina ministers in matters pertaining to covenanting thought as an advocate of civil rights and religious liberty.

Of the same ilk, John Witherspoon also contributed to the education and later ideology of resistance in North Carolina. Born in Scotland and a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, Witherspoon influenced several ministers and leaders in North Carolina through his presidency and teaching at the College of New Jersey (1768-1792). He migrated to the colonies in 1768 and served as the sixth president of the College of New Jersey until 1792.⁷ Like Davies, Witherspoon left his mark as a scholar and American Patriot. Witherspoon was not a Covenanter per se, but he was the grandson of a Covenanter.⁸ Both men had significant ties and connections to the expansion of covenanting thought throughout North Carolina and its prominent Presbyterian leaders.

In North Carolina, a few men played vital roles through education in advancing the political theology of covenanting thought that later prompted this region in North Carolina to become known as a 'hornet's nest of rebellion'.⁹ The connection between these men to one another was through their education, ministries, or familial relationships. Equally, these men demonstrated the influence that Presbyterianism had in various arenas throughout early-American culture in North Carolina. Whether in schools, colleges, or universities, they guided North Carolina at all levels in public

⁷ W. Frank Craven, 'John Witherspoon' in *A Princeton Companion*, ed. Alexander Leitch (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1978) [accessed online: http://etcweb.princeton.edu/CampusWWW/Companion/witherspoon_john.html]

⁸ Gideon Mailer, 'Anglo-Scottish Union and John Witherspoon's American Revolution' in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 67, no. 4, (October 2010), p. 710.

⁹ William A. Graham, *General Joseph Graham and his papers on North Carolina Revolutionary History* (Raleigh: Edwards & Broughton, 1904), pp. 84-85.

education. The remainder of this section will examine the tradition and means of education as evidenced in the backcountry of North Carolina.

Their fervent passion for catechism spurred other Presbyterians to demand their children's training in this manner. This impulse for catechism made its way to the American Colonies. James Geddes Craighead wrote that 'the Bible and the catechism held an honored place in the instruction of youth in their schools and in their families'.¹⁰ This so-called honoured place was evident in North Carolina through the ministry and leadership of Henry Pattillo.

Henry Pattillo used the catechism for teaching children and the enslaved. Beyond this need for children and youth to understand various doctrines, he expanded the catechism to train children in matters of geography and history.¹¹ Although published in 1787, Pattillo utilised his catechism, *The Plain Planter's Family Assistant* as a means of education in North Carolina well before this time. His immense devotion as a student influenced his passion as an educator. In one journal entry dated 30 May 1755, Pattillo noted of his prayer and fasting and wrote:

His blessing on me as a Student that I may pursue my Studies assiduously, and that the great end of 'em may be The Glory of God, and the salvation of Men. That he would give me extensive experience in Christian Exercises... that I may have sufficient Fund of useful Knowledge, that no reproach may come on the Ministry

¹⁰ James Geddes Craighead, *Scotch and Irish Seeds in American Soil: The Early History of the Scotch and Irish Churches, and their relations to the Presbyterian Church of America* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Education, 1878), p. 282.

¹¹ An example of this is seen in Henry Pattillo, *The Plain Planter's Family Assistant; containing an address to husbands and wives, children and servants. With some helps for instruction by catechisms; and examples of devotion for families: with a brief paraphrase on the Lord's prayer* (Wilmington, DE: James Adams, 1787) and Henry Pattillo, *A Geographical Catechism, to assist those who have neither Maps nor Gazetteers, to read News-papers, History, Travels' With as much of the Science of Astronomy, and the Doctrine of the AIR, as is judged sufficient for the farmer, who wishes to understand something of the Works of God, around him; and for the studious youth, who have or have not a prospect of further prosecuting those sublime sciences* (Halifax, NC: Abraham Hodge, 1796).

through my ignorance; that I may have Courage, Zeal, Prudence, Diligence and Success.¹²

This same zeal was how he approached his catechising and instruction to young people in his church in North Carolina. Durward Stokes noted that ‘Henry Pattillo was both a student and teacher all of his life. To him education was only secondary to preaching the Gospel’.¹³ Stokes further noted that early after Pattillo’s arrival in North Carolina, he began a school in his home for the purpose of educating young men.

Pattillo further encouraged education of children not only be in the classroom, but in the family’s living room. He noted in *The Plain Planter’s Family Assistant* that a ‘family is a little community within itself; of which smaller bodies, states and kingdoms are compiled’.¹⁴ Pattillo set out several rules or requirements for education in an undated manuscript named, ‘Rules for Christian Societies or fellowship meetings’. In it, he emphasised the catechism, noting that education demanded ‘prayer, praise, reading at least one chapter of the Old or of the New Testament and other good books, and *speaking to the questions* proposed at the last meeting’.¹⁵ Progressing beyond education simply for children, parishioners within covenanting thought that sought higher positions whether in civic or religious arenas, required high school and later university education.

¹² Fragments from Henry Pattillo’s personal journal or diary, 30 May 1755, Box 1, Folder 1/5, Personal Papers of Henry Pattillo, 1726-1801, Williams Smith Morton Library, Archives and Special Collections, Union Presbyterian Seminary.

¹³ Stokes, ‘Henry Pattillo in North Carolina’, p. 380.

¹⁴ Pattillo, *The Plain Planter’s Family Assistant*, p. 7.

¹⁵ Rules for Christian Societies or fellowship meetings’, undated, Box 1, Folder 1/4, Personal Papers of Henry Pattillo, 1726-1801, Williams Smith Morton Library, Archives and Special Collections, Union Presbyterian Seminary. [Italics mine for emphasis]

The ministers of North Carolina took this charge from Knox seriously, as William Henry Foote noted in his *Sketches of North Carolina* that ‘wherever a pastor was located, in that congregation there was a classical school’.¹⁶ The leaders and ministers from the middle colonies as seen by William Tennent in Pennsylvania with his Log College passed down to the ministers in North Carolina their fervour and legacy for learning. Tennent founded the school for the purpose of training ministers and ‘offered a tough curriculum consisting of theology, Greek, Latin, and the “arts and sciences”’.¹⁷ Shortly after 1726, ‘Mr. Tennent’ as William Sprague wrote, ‘being deeply impressed with the importance of a well-educated as well as pious ministry, resolved on establishing a school at which young men might acquire the requisite qualification for the sacred office’.¹⁸ William Tennent, a graduate of the University of Edinburgh, migrated to the American Colonies in 1718 and was ordained to the Presbyterian Church shortly after his arrival. In 1726, he established Log College. Sprague enthusiastically wrote that it ‘may be safely said that the establishment of this institution, known as the “Log College,” marked an epoch in the history of clerical education, at least in the Presbyterian Church, in this country’.¹⁹ After Tennent’s death in 1746, the Log College ceased operating. Shortly afterwards, the College of New Jersey was founded and chartered, and a number of the Log College alumni became trustees of the newly formed college. Other Presbyterian ministers started

¹⁶ William Henry Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of her Early Settlers* (New York: Robert Carter, 1846), p. 513.

¹⁷ Ron Chepesiuk, *The Scotch-Irish: From the North of Ireland to the Making of America*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2005). pp. 138-139.

¹⁸ William B. Sprague, ‘William Tennent: 1718-1746’ in *Annals of the American Pulpit or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of various denominations, from the Early Settlement of the Country to the Close of the Year Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-five, with historical introductions*, vol. III, (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1858), p. 24.

¹⁹ Sprague, ‘William Tennent’, p. 24.

other academies and colleges, which included Hampden-Sydney in 1776 in the Piedmont region of Virginia and Washington & Jefferson in 1780 in Pennsylvania.²⁰ Some traced the legacy of Tennent's Log College directly to North Carolina as one of the graduates of Log College, Samuel Blair established a college known as Fagg's Manor where Samuel Davies obtained his ministerial training. Davies was very influential in the lives of a number of North Carolina ministers. One such minister was David Caldwell who established his own Log College near his church in Guilford County, North Carolina.

Caldwell's Log College proved to be quite influential as Eli Caruthers noted in his biography of Caldwell that 'five of his scholars became governors of different states; many more members of Congress, some of whom occupied high standing ... and a much greater number became lawyers, judges, physicians, and ministers of the gospel'.²¹ Later in this same biography, Caruthers shared the letter from one of Caldwell's students who wrote that 'Dr. Caldwell, as a teacher, was probably more useful to the church than any one man in the United States. I could name about forty ministers who received their education in whole or in part from him'.²² According to Foote and Caruthers, Caldwell's Log College was probably the second classical school in North Carolina behind one established at Sugar Creek in Mecklenburg County.²³

²⁰ Chepesiuk, *The Scotch-Irish*, p. 139.

²¹ Eli. W. Caruthers, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D.D.: Near Sixty Years Pastor of the Churches of Buffalo and Alamance* (Greensborough, NC: Swaim and Sherwood, 1842), p. 31.

²² Caruthers, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell*, p. 37.

²³ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, p. 234-235, and Caruthers, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of Rev. David Caldwell*, p. 30.

Joseph Alexander was another influential educator and minister in North Carolina. Like the others, he entered into the College of New Jersey in 1759 (alongside Benjamin Rush) under the leadership of Samuel Davies. In 1760, he married Davies' daughter, Martha Esther Davies. Shortly after receiving his license for ministry from the New Castle Presbytery, Alexander founded a classical school at Sugar Creek in North Carolina. In 1768, before taking the pastorate of Sugar Creek, Alexander received his ordination from Henry Pattillo along with David Caldwell. Alexander further expanded his influence and reach as he later instructed Samuel McCorkle. He also served for two years as a trustee and tutor at Queen's College.²⁴

'In the matter of higher education, the interior set an enviable example', as Carl Bridenbaugh wrote regarding the Presbyterian establishment of Queens College in Mecklenburg County.²⁵ In Mecklenburg County and the surrounding areas, the growth of population required additional places of higher learning. Rather than continuing to send their children north to the College of New Jersey for their education, many elders and pastors in the area came together and petitioned for the founding of a new place of higher learning. This was Queen's College in Charlotte. On 15 January 1771, at the height of the Regulator Movement, the General Assembly of North Carolina adopted an 'Act for Founding Establishing and endowing of Queen's College in the Town of Charlotte in Mecklenburg County'.²⁶ Governor

²⁴ James McLachlan, 'Joseph Alexander' in *Princetonians, 1748-1768: A Biographical Dictionary*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), pp. 299-300, Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, pp. 193-194, Durward T. Stokes, 'Joseph Alexander' in *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 1, ed. William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), p. 16.

²⁵ Carl Bridenbaugh, *Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South*, (New York: Atheneum, 1976), p. 188.

²⁶ 'Act of the North Carolina General Assembly concerning Queen's College', in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. VIII, ed. Williams T. Saunders (Raleigh: Joseph Daniels, 1886), pp. 486-490.

Tryon was apprehensive about the approval for the college, but recognised its necessity in a letter written to the Earl of Hillsborough. His apprehension was due to the majority of the trustees being Presbyterian as all but two of the trustees were Presbyterian dissenters.²⁷ The influence of the Presbyterians in the drafting of the Act was quite evident as the opening paragraph of this Act detailed the need for Queen's College and stated:

Whereas the proper education of Youth has always been considered as the most certain source of tranquillity, happiness and improvement both of private families and of States and Empires and there being no Institution or Seminary of Learning established in this Province, whither the rising generation may repair, after having acquired at a Grammar School a competent knowledge of the Greek, Hebrew and Latin Languages to imbibe the principles of Science and virtue and to obtain under learned, pious and exemplary teachers in a collegiate or academic mode of instruction a regular and finished education in order to qualify them for the service of their friends and Country.²⁸

This was similar to Knox's 'necessity of schools' from his *First Book of Discipline* where Knox wrote:

Of necessity it is that your honours be most careful for the virtuous education and godly upbringing of the youth of this realm ... or yet desire the continuance of his benefits to the generation following. For as the youth must succeed to us, so we ought to be careful that they have the knowledge and erudition to profit and comfort that which ought to be most dear to us-to wit.²⁹

In both cases, the primary need for schools was for the purpose of service to country or realm. However, one aspect not evidenced in the Act was Knox's justification for education as a means to 'purge the Church of God from all superstition, and to set it at

²⁷ 'Letter from William Tryon to Wills Hill, Marquis of Downshire' in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. VIII, ed. Williams T. Saunders (Raleigh: Joseph Daniels, 1886), pp. 525-527.

²⁸ 'Act of the North Carolina General Assembly concerning Queen's College', pp. 486-487.

²⁹ John Knox, 'The First Book of Discipline' in the *History of the Reformation of Scotland*, vol. 2, ed. William Croft Dickenson, (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1949), pp. 295. [Afterwards referred as *First Book of Discipline*]

liberty from bondage of tyrants'.³⁰ It was no wonder that according to Foote, King George III refused to approve the charter for Queen's College as 'A college, under such auspices, was too well calculated to ensure the growth of the numerous democracy'.³¹ On 7 April 1773, King George III disallowed the establishment of Queen's College.³² Although George III denied the charter, Queen's College remained open under the name of Queen's Museum, and later changed its name to Liberty Hall in 1777, where 'twelve of the fifteen trustees were Princeton graduates'.³³ It remained in operation until 1784 before moving to Salisbury, North Carolina and renamed Salisbury Academy.³⁴ Although Queen's College was a short-lived venture for the promotion of higher education in North Carolina, many of the same men who promoted its establishment also contributed to its library.

The Mecklenburg Library

In the backcountry of North Carolina, few libraries had existed, but we know of many private collections as Charles Woodmason recalled in his journal that the Scotch-Irish in the backcountry had the *Westminster Catechism*, Erskine's *Sermons*, and volumes of other books.³⁵ Moreover, between 1771 and 1774, Waightstill Avery a prominent

³⁰ *First Book of Discipline*, pp. 295.

³¹ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, p. 513.

³² And 'Proclamation by Josiah Martin concerning an act of the North Carolina General Assembly concerning Queen's College' in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. IX, ed. Williams T. Saunders (Raleigh: Joseph Daniels, 1886), pp. 665.

³³ 'An Act for incorporating the president and trustees of Liberty Hall, in the county of Mecklenburg' in the *Collection of the private acts of the General Assembly of the state of North Carolina: from the year 1715, to the year 1790, inclusive, now in force and use*. (Newbern: Francois-Xavier Martin, 1794), pp. 75-76. Also see Donald Robert Come, 'The Influence of Princeton Higher Education in the South before 1825' in *The William & Mary Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 4 (October 1945), p. 380. (359-396)

³⁴ Marshall DeLancy Haywood, 'The Story of Queen's College or Liberty Hall in the Province of North Carolina' in *The North Carolina Booklet*, vol. XI, no. 3 (January 1912), p. 169-175.

³⁵ Charles Woodmason, *The Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution: The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant*, Richard J. Hooker, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), p. 135.

lawyer and Queen's College trustee, along with the gifts of almost 40 men established 'The Mecklenburg Library' at Queen's College chartered 15 January 1771.³⁶ The Mecklenburg Library had 'a representative collection of current books', such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, and Locke, but it also had 'a selected list of works of Presbyterian divinity'.³⁷ The titles purchased reveal the trustees' belief of the college having a large and refined library necessary for the education of youth in Mecklenburg County.

Much of the Scottish ideas concerning civil and ecclesiastical government were available and familiar in America. For example, Andrew Stewart in Philadelphia printed George Buchanan's *De Jure Regni apud Scotos* in 1766.³⁸ Thomas Jefferson, according to James Brown Scott, 'possessed a complete edition of Buchanan's works and must therefore have been familiar with the latter's theories on the subject of tyranny'.³⁹ Other founders included Buchanan's works in their libraries, such as John Adams.⁴⁰ The above demonstrates a possibility of covenanting ideology making its way to America through indirect means. However, evidence exists that demonstrates a direct connection to Covenanter ideology in Mecklenburg County. An additional manuscript labeled 'Library Purchased for Mecklenburg Library' is an invoice detailing books sold to 'Ware & Son' by the London merchants Messrs Mildred &

³⁶ I am indebted to James Williams and Robin Brabham of the Mecklenburg Historical Association for their recommendations to investigate the Francis L. Hawks Collection at the New York Historical Society and the R. Lillard Stewart Papers at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte – Special Collections. These two sources proved to be invaluable to my research.

³⁷ Bridenbaugh, *Myths and Realities*, p. 190.

³⁸ Roger A. Mason and Martin S. Smith, *A Dialogue of the Law of Kingship Among the Scots: A Critical Edition and Translation of George Buchanan's De Jure Regni apud Scotos Dialogus*, (New York: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), pp. xv-xvi.

³⁹ James Brown Scott, *Law, the State, and the International Community*, (Clark, NJ: The Lawbook Exchange, Ltd., 2003), p. 414.

⁴⁰ Trevor Colbourn, *The Lamp of Experience: Whig History and the Intellectual Origins of the American Revolution*, (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1998), p. 260.

Roberts, who had extensive connections with Philadelphia.⁴¹ The invoice totalled £32.18.3. Mildred and Roberts sent all they could find and promised to send others as they became available. There was a total of 76 titles and 127 volumes. The invoice lacks details concerning the date or the currency paid; however, on the reverse of the second page a cataloguer, 'Mr Statler' wrote, 'Catalogue for Mclambrg Library 1774'.⁴² The names listed were of trustees that appear to have contributed to the amount owed. The cataloguer 'Mr Statler' was Peter Statler, who was a German (Reformed) Calvinist that built a small schoolhouse around 1765 on the South Fork of the Catawba River, which is near Steele Creek Church, one of the seven sisters in southwest Charlotte.⁴³ This list of books included William Robertson's *History of Scotland* and John Thomson's *Cloud of Witnesses*.

Waightstill Avery procured the first books for the library from a bookseller in Salisbury by the name of Matthew Troy on 'July 14, 1772'.⁴⁴ The catalogue of the books purchased contained 15 titles that totaled 35 volumes. The total cost of the purchase was £18.2.0, which included packing and carriage. Most of the titles were for learning and of a religious or moral nature. Some of the prominent titles included were 'Hume's *History*', 'Predaux's *Connections*', '*Elements Criticisms*', and 'Watt's *Logicks*'. On the opposite side of the Avery invoice dated 14 July 1772 was another

⁴¹ According to the Benjamin Franklin Papers, Daniel Mildred was 'a Quaker merchant and partner in the London firm Mildred and Roberts, which had extensive Philadelphia connections'. See 'To Benjamin Franklin from Daniel Mildred, 16 July 1782', Founders Online, National Archives, [Original source: The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vol. 37, March 16 through August 15, 1782, ed. Ellen R. Cohn. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003, pp. 632–633.]

⁴² 'Catalogue of Mecklenburg Library' MS, North Carolina Manuscripts of Francis L. Hawks, 1771–1850, pp. 369–372, Patricia D. Klingenstein Library of the New York Historical Society Museum and Library.

⁴³ D. A. Tompkins, *History of Mecklenburg County and The City of Charlotte from 1740 to 1903*, (Charlotte, NC: Observer Printing House, 1903), p. 108.

⁴⁴ 'Mecklenburg Library' MS, North Carolina Manuscripts of Francis L. Hawks, 1771–1850, p. 91, Patricia D. Klingenstein Library of the New York Historical Society Museum and Library.

list of eight ‘Books voted into the Liby July 28, 1772’ and followed by four additional pages that included prominent names as well as trustees of the college who voted and contributed to the library.⁴⁵ Many of these men participated in the Committee on Safety and the passing of the Mecklenburg Resolves, such as Adam Alexander, Hezekiah Alexander, James Harris, John Flannigan, John McKnitt Alexander, and again Waightstill Avery. Again, most of the titles were for the purposes of learning as shown above. However, one donor by the name of Andrew Elliot contributed two texts that provided the students and leaders in Mecklenburg County direct knowledge and awareness to Covenanter political theology—John Thomson’s *Cloud of Witnesses* and Alexander Shields’ *A Hind Let Loose*. According to John Brevard Alexander’s *Biographical Sketches of the Early Settlers of Hopewell Section*, Andrew Elliot ‘lived two miles south of the church. He and his family were constant attendants at Hopewell’.⁴⁶ Accordingly, the Mecklenburg Library had two copies of *Cloud of Witnesses*. Thomson’s *Cloud of Witnesses* was a martyrology about Scottish Covenanters. It provided a romantic perspective for North Carolina Presbyterians about the lives and cause for which the Scottish Covenanters died—the ideals of a virtuous government. Neither accounts specify the year of publication, but the 1715 edition included James Stewart’s *Naphtali*. Regardless, through *Cloud of Witnesses*, the reader had Donald Cargill’s *Queensferry Paper*, which provided a roadmap on declaring independence as it stated:

We do declare that we shall set up over ourselves and over what God shall give us power of, government and governors according to the Word of God;... that we shall

⁴⁵ ‘Books Voted for Mecklenburg Library’ MS, North Carolina Manuscripts of Francis L. Hawks, 1771-1850, pp. 92-96, Patricia D. Klingenstein Library of the New York Historical Society Museum and Library.

⁴⁶ John Brevard Alexander, *Biographical Sketches of the Early Settlers of the Hopewell section and Reminiscences of the pioneers and their descendants by families, with some Historical Facts and Incidents of the Times in which they Lived*, (Charlotte, NC: Observer Printing and Publishing House, 1897), p. 61.

no more commit the government of ourselves and the making of laws for us, to any one single person,... and this kind of government by a single person being most liable to inconveniences, and aptest to degenerate into tyranny.⁴⁷

Likewise, Alexander Shield's *A Hind Let Loose* summarised Stewart's justification for resistance and the roadmap for establishing a democratic government.⁴⁸ Calvin Beisner quoted C.K. Sharpe in his thesis that '*Naphtali, Jus Populi Vindicatum*, and ... *Hind Let Loose*... were in almost as much esteem with the Presbyterians as their Bibles'.⁴⁹ Many of the same men who promoted the establishment of Queen's Museum and the Mecklenburg Library went on and later promoted and supported the establishment of a public university in North Carolina.

University Education

The covenanting tradition demanded higher education and learning from its leaders, unlike Jonathan Edwards, who 'approved and even participated in the ordination of ministers who lacked college degrees'.⁵⁰ The American Covenanters in North Carolina demanded that their ministers have a college or university education. This was evident by looking to the men listed previously, as they founded colleges and academies

⁴⁷ Donald Cargill, *A true and exact copy of a treasonable and bloody-paper called the Fanaticks new-covenant which was taken from Mr. Donald Cargill at Queens-Ferry the third day of June, anno Dom. 1680 one of their field-preachers, a declared rebel and traitor ; together with their execrable declaration published at the Cross of Sanquhair upon the twenty two day of the said month of June after a solemn procession and singing of Psalms by Cameron the notorious ring-leader of and preacher at their field-conventicles, accompanied with twenty of that wretched crew*, (Edinburgh: Printed by the heir of Andrew Anderson, 1680), pp. 6-7, Accessed *Early English Books Online* on 25 January 2017.

⁴⁸ Alexander Shields, *A Hind Let Loose, or, An historical representation of the testimonies of the Church of Scotland for the interest of Christ with the true state thereof in all its periods : together with a vindication of the present testimonie, against the Popish, prelatical, & malignant enemies of that church ... : wherein several controversies of greatest consequence are enquired into, and in some measure cleared, concerning hearing of the curats, owning of the present tyrannie, taking of ensnaring oaths & bonds, frequenting of field meetings, defensive resistance of tyrannical violence ... / by a lover of true liberty*, (np, 1687).

⁴⁹ E. Calvin Beisner, 'His Majesty's Advocate: Sir James Stewart of Goodtrees (1635-1713) and Covenanter Resistance Theory Under the Restoration Monarchy', (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of St Andrews, 2002), p. 80.

⁵⁰ Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966). p. 189.

throughout North Carolina.⁵¹ As shown above, the College of New Jersey was very influential to the ministers and leaders in North Carolina; however, for the same purpose of Queen's College, many wanted a university in North Carolina that was nearby and available to the public. 'Even though Queen's College had been broken up by war', as Donald Come noted, 'the Scotch-Irish retained their ambition to establish a top-ranking institution. The delegates to the North Carolina constitutional convention in 1776 from Mecklenburg County, the strongest centre of Scotch-Irish population, were instructed to promote the establishment and endowment of such an institution'.⁵²

Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, a prominent minister and educator was born in Pennsylvania and moved with his family in 1756 to the backcountry of North Carolina. After studying under Joseph Alexander and David Caldwell at Queen's College, he moved to Princeton where he studied under John Witherspoon and graduated in 1772. He later served as a trustee for Liberty Hall in Charlotte. McCorkle also served at The University of North Carolina as its first professor. He, like all mentioned above, supported the American Revolution. He died at the age of sixty-four in 1811.⁵³

⁵¹ Walter W. Moore, 'Beginnings and Development of the Presbyterian Church in North Carolina' in *Appreciations and Historical Addresses* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1914), pp. 164-165.

⁵² Come, 'The Influence of Princeton Higher Education in the South before 1825', p. 381-382.

⁵³ E.W. Caruthers, 'Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, D.D., 1774-1811' in *Annals of the American Pulpit or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of various Denominations, from the early settlement of the Country to the Globe of the year Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-Five with Historical Introductions*, Vol. III, ed. William B. Sprague (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1858), pp. 346-349; Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, pp. 350-362; James F. Hurley and Julia G. Eagan, *The Prophet of Zion-Parnassus, Samuel Eusebius McCorkle* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1934); Enger and Taylor, 'Samuel Eusebius McCorkle (23 Aug. 1746 – 21 Jan. 1811)', pp. 128-130; and Thomas T. Taylor, 'Samuel E. McCorkle and a Christian republic, 1792-1802' in *American Presbyterians* 63, no 4 (Winter 1985), pp. 375-385.

The establishment of a university was so vital during this period that article XLI of the State Constitution of North Carolina of 1776 detailed:

That a School or Schools shall be established by the Legislature, for the convenient Instruction of Youth, with such Salaries to the Masters, paid by the public, as may enable them to instruct at low Prices; and all useful Learning shall be duely encouraged and promoted in one or more Universities.⁵⁴

McCorkle sought to fulfil this requirement as William Enger and Thomas Taylor noted that, ‘in 1784, he drafted, in accordance with the provisions of the 1776 constitution of North Carolina, the first proposal to found a university in the state. For political reasons, the legislature rejected this proposal, and The University of North Carolina was not chartered until 1789’.⁵⁵ Robert Polk Thomson rightly noted that out of the Revolution ‘came a handful of liberal educational thinkers whose vision of enlightened republicanism included the idea of the university as a center of humane learning devoted to the service of the state and society’.⁵⁶ This was evident in McCorkle’s *Charity Sermon* given at the laying of the cornerstone of the university, he stated:

How, it will be asked, shall liberty be preserved? I reply again, in this connection of ideas, by raising up regular well-educated ministers of state, who shall protect and favour religion, and form and execute righteous laws. How, and where, and when shall these ministers be thus qualified? I reply, by a well conducted, liberal, university education, begun in early life, at a place furnished with every possible convenience for the early and extensive acquisition of all useful knowledge, human and divine.⁵⁷

⁵⁴ *The Constitution, or Form of Government, Agreed To and Resolved Upon by the Representatives of the Freemen of the State of North-Carolina, Elected and Chosen for that Particular Purpose, in Congress Assembled, at Halifax, the Eighteenth Day of December in the Year of Our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy-Six.* (Philadelphia: Printed by F. Bailey, in Market-Street, 1779), p. 15.

⁵⁵ William Randolph Enger and Thomas T. Taylor, ‘Samuel Eusebius McCorkle’ in *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 4, ed. William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp. 129.

⁵⁶ Robert Polk Thomson, ‘Colleges in the Revolutionary South: The Shaping of a Tradition’ in *History of Education Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 4 (Winter, 1970), p. 408 (399-412)

⁵⁷ Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, *A Charity Sermon. First Delivered in Salisbury, July 28; and Afterwards in Other Places in Rowan, and the Counties Adjoining; Particularly at Sugar’s Creek, in Mecklenburg County, at the Opening of the Synod of the Carolinas, October 2: and Last, at the*

Although this quote was specific to Christians, throughout this sermon, McCorkle appealed on various levels and varied audiences as to why contributing to the University of North Carolina was vital for the state and for the country. Pertaining to the importance of education for all, he noted that ‘Public knowledge is public glory. Seats of science give dignity to the nation... Ministers of state! I beg leave to ask, How can you preserve public knowledge without seats of literature? The experience of all ages has pronounced it impossible’.⁵⁸ He believed for North Carolina to gain acceptance and recognition within the United States that it required an established institution for the education of her citizens. Near the conclusion of his sermon, he said, ‘As a state, let us view our standing in the Union--and as a continent or nation, among the nations of the world. Let us be roused by the exertions that have been made by others to promote science human and divine’.⁵⁹ Through this discourse, he clearly endorsed the relationship between education and government.

Although the individual’s need for education was important, the Covenanters believed the individual’s place within a larger community was equally significant within covenanting thought. This demanded laws. McCorkle, citing *The Federalist*, preached that ‘A nation without laws, is an awful spectacle’.⁶⁰ McCorkle made the comparison of laws to that of a national government. Those of covenanting thought, like McCorkle, believed the origins of constitutional thought was equally vital as

Meeting of the Hon. The General Assembly of North-Carolina in Fayetteville, December, 1793. By the Rev. Samuel E. M'Corkle, D.D. Pastor of the Church at Thyatira and Salisbury in Rowan County, North-Carolina, (Halifax, NC: Abraham Hodge, 1795), p. 54.

⁵⁸ McCorkle, *A Charity Sermon*, p. 57.

⁵⁹ McCorkle, *A Charity Sermon*, p. 63.

⁶⁰ McCorkle, *A Charity Sermon*, p. 59. Hamilton actually wrote in Federalist Paper No. 85, that ‘A NATION, without a NATIONAL GOVERNMENT, is, in my view, an awful spectacle’. See Alexander Hamilton, ‘Number LXXXV. Conclusion’ in *The Federalist: A Collection of Essays written in favour of the new Constitution, as agreed upon by the Federal Convention, September 17, 1787*. Vol. II, (New York: J. and A. McLean, 1788), pp. 364-365.

education and necessary for a nation to succeed. The same men who wrote catechisms, started schools and colleges, and founded a university were influential beyond the pulpit and classroom lectern. Coupled with the high view of education and importance of institutions, many of the men that taught at the local academies and colleges in North Carolina were adamant to participate in their civic duties. Many served as delegates to congressional meetings in North Carolina. Alternatively, they educated other leaders within North Carolina. The remainder of this chapter in small measure will seek to overcome this deficiency and examine the continued relationship between these men and their contributions of covenanting thought upon the institution of government in North Carolina.

‘You make the laws by which you are governed’

According to Calvin and Knox, the moral welfare of the entire population was the joint responsibility of the church and the state. For matters concerning ecclesiastical polity in Scotland, the Presbyterian system was organised as an ascending series of courts: session, presbytery, synod, and General Assembly. Representatives from the lower body elected those who participated in each. For example, the members of the congregation elected the session, the session then elected representatives to the presbytery, which in turn elected the representatives to the Synod, and finally the members of the Synod made up the General Assembly. The session governs the local congregation and includes ruling elders and ministerial elders. One can look at this list and see the similarities to the basis of the American system of government and Constitution. For the Covenanters, democracy was synonymous with the eighteenth-century understanding of republicanism or the good and safety of the public or community. Bernard Bailyn broadly stated that the terms ‘republican’ and

‘democracy’ were synonymous, whereas Gordon Wood made the distinction that republicanism focused to the public’s general good and safety and determined that ‘republicanism was not equated with democracy’.⁶¹ This debate has been long lasting as James Byrd noted:

Republicanism was both central to the Revolution and notoriously hard to define—even the learned founders disagreed over what it meant. John Adams, who knew as much about republican ideas as anyone, once claimed neither he nor anyone else ‘ever did or ever will’ know the full meaning of republicanism. Despite its complexity, republicanism at least included a firm belief in virtue and liberty, and a fear that liberty was always threatened by vice and tyranny.⁶²

Wood also argued that Heimert ‘exaggerated the uniqueness of the Calvinist emphasis on the communal character and corporate power of the people’.⁶³ However, Heimert’s interpretation of the communal character reflected how Rutherford and later Covenanters interpreted democracy.

Craighead also held to the understanding that all people were equal and free in the sight of God while believing that God, as the Federal Head, ordained all governments. He wrote rebuking the king that he took ‘to himself a Headship over the Church, and Government of the Consciences of Men, which is due to God alone’.⁶⁴ Pattillo, like Craighead, led the charge towards republicanism throughout North Carolina. Stokes wrote concerning Pattillo that he was ‘a very influential participant in the political

⁶¹ Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution*, enlarged edition, (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of the Harvard University Press, 1967, 1992), p. 282; Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969, 1998), p. 222.

⁶² James P. Byrd, *Sacred Scripture, Sacred War: The Bible and the American Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 9.

⁶³ Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787*, p. 60–fn29.; and Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), pp. 351-453.

⁶⁴ Alexander Craighead, *Renewal of the Covenants, National and Solemn League; A Confession of Sins; and Engagement to Duties; and a testimony; As they were carried on at Middle Octorara in Pennsylvania, November 11, 1743. Together with an introductory preface*, (Philadelphia: B. Franklin 1743, 1748), p. 64.

activities that attended the transition of North Carolina from an English colony into an American state'.⁶⁵ For example, Pattillo served as the chaplain for the Third Provincial Congress in North Carolina from 20 August 1775 – 10 September 1775. He received appointment as a member of the Provincial Council for the Halifax District. While serving as chaplain of the congress, the members declared:

do solemnly profess, testify and declare that we do absolutely believe that neither the Parliament of Great Britain, nor any Member or Constituent Branch thereof, have a right to impose Taxes upon these Colonies to regulate the internal police thereof; and that all attempts by fraud or force to establish and exercise such Claims and powers are Violations of the peace and Security of the people and ought to be resisted to the utmost. And that the people of this province, singly and collectively, are bound by the Acts and resolutions of the Continental and the Provincial Congresses, *because in both they are freely represented by persons chosen by themselves*; And we do solemnly and sincerely promise and engage, under the Sanction of virtue, honor, and the sacred Love of Liberty, and our Country, to maintain and support all and every the Acts, Resolutions and Regulations, of the said Continental and Provincial Congresses, to the utmost of our power and Abilities.⁶⁶

Pattillo affirmed this with his signature and demonstrated his belief in the role of the community in government. He further demonstrated his affirmation when he wrote in his *The Plain Planter's Family Assistant*:

Never forget the wonders God hath wrought for your country. The acknowledged independence of America... it has, to the vast extent of continent, secured those civil and religious liberties, which are unknown in any other part of the globe. For you are thereby, not only delivered from the tyranny of kings, the rapacity of courtiers, and the dominion of lords spiritual and temporal; but you can elect or be elected into any office of your country. You make the laws by which you are governed.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Stokes, 'Henry Pattillo in North Carolina', p. 373.

⁶⁶ 'Minutes of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina' in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. X, ed. William L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1886), pp. 171-172.

⁶⁷ Henry Pattillo, *The Plain Planter's Family Assistant; containing an address to husbands and wives, children and servants. With some helps for instruction by catechisms; and examples of devotion for families: with a brief paraphrase on the Lord's prayer* (Wilmington, DE: James Adams, 1787), p. 7.

Craighead and Pattillo demonstrated a sincere passion for representation that further influenced the notion of republicanism throughout North Carolina.

Rutherford argued, as shown previously that the people formed and established new governments or rulers. As the title of his magnum opus, *Lex, Rex*, Rutherford believed that the law preceded the king, and as a result, the rule of law resided in the citizens. The citizens elected officers and representatives responsible to them and governed according to law. Rutherford went so far as to say that a republic must appoint rulers to govern over them, and to neglect this opportunity would be a violation of the fifth commandment.⁶⁸ The Covenanters in North Carolina followed Rutherford's lead regarding this notion of republicanism.⁶⁹

As an intellectual concept, republicanism received examination thoroughly from a political and social perspective but has been overlooked as a religious concept.⁷⁰ For example, many within an American context recognised republicanism as an ideology originating from the classical Roman model. M.N.S. Sellers noted that 'Roman republicanism was [not] the only or even the primary influence on the American

⁶⁸ Pattillo, *The Plain Planter's Family Assistant*, p. 9. For a more detailed examination into Rutherford's interpretation concerning this "breach", see Peter Judson Richards, "'The Law Written in Their Hearts'?: Rutherford and Locke on Nature, Government and Resistance in *Journal of Law and Religion* 18, issue 1 (2002), pp. 176-183.

⁶⁹ For a more detailed analysis of Rutherford's interpretation in relation to his republican ideals, see Ian Michael Smart, 'The Political Ideas of the Scottish Covenanters, 1638-1688' in *History of Political Thought*, vol. 1, no. 2 (June, 1980), pp. 168-193; John Coffey, *Politics, Religion and the British Revolutions: The Mind of Samuel Rutherford* (New York, Cambridge University Press, 1997); Peter J. Herz, 'Covenant to Constitutionalism: Rule of Law as a Theological Ideal in Reformed Scotland' (Unpublished PhD dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 2001), specifically chapter IV; Shaun A. De Freitas, 'Samuel Rutherford on Law and Covenant: The Impact of Theologico-political Federalism on Constitutional Theory' (Unpublished ML Thesis, University of the Free State, 2003); and Shaun A. De Freitas, 'Law and Federal-Republicanism: Samuel Rutherford's Quest for a Constitutional Model' (Unpublished LLD Thesis, 2014).

⁷⁰ Isaac Kramnick, *Republicanism and Bourgeois Radicalism: Political Ideology in Late Eighteenth-Century England and America*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990) and Gordon S. Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1969).

Revolution or the United States Constitution’; however, he later insisted ‘that when Americans used the word “republic” they thought of Rome’.⁷¹ Many of the intellectuals and framers of the Constitution thought of Rome when using the term ‘republic’, but Sellers’ insistence on the thoughts of Rome was a bit narrow. The concept of republic evolved throughout all of Europe since its inception in Rome, and it is through this evolution that ‘republic’ requires investigation.

James Smylie argued that the American ‘forefathers...sought sanction from the Hebrew and Christian scriptures for the political direction in which they moved in the writing and ratifying of state constitutions and the Constitution of the United States of America’.⁷² Colin Kidd also asserted that the ‘American republican tradition – both before and after the Revolution – was characterized by ambivalence on the question of ecclesiastical polity’.⁷³ Yet, he made the broad claim that Calvinist political theory was a product of New England Puritanism as accepted from previous scholarship. However, through the revivals and the improved channels of communication, Calvinism was prevalent in the southern colonies also. James Leyburn noted that ‘since one American in every ten was by 1775 Scotch-Irish, and since their settlements were to be found in the western frontier regions of every colony, their opinions, actions, beliefs, and personal characteristics inevitably contributed to the making of the new Republic’.⁷⁴

⁷¹ M.N.S. Sellers, *American Republicanism: Roman Ideology in the United States Constitution* (Houndmills: MacMillan Press, 1994), p. 7.

⁷² James H. Smylie, ‘America’s Political Covenant, the Bible, and Calvinists’, in *The Journal of Presbyterian History*, vol. 75, no. 3 (Fall, 1997), p. 158.

⁷³ Colin Kidd, ‘Civil Theology and Church Establishments in Revolutionary America’ in *The Historical Journal* 42, no 4, (Dec 1999), p. 1018.

⁷⁴ James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962), p. 14.

In North Carolina, Craighead influenced many to republican ideals set out by the Scottish Covenanters. Uniquely, in 1743, the Presbyterian Church charged Craighead for being treasonous with his *Renewal of the Covenants*, but later this same organisation conformed to his ideals and called upon all Presbyterian Churches to join in the cause of liberty.⁷⁵ Foote elevated Craighead and eloquently noted of his influence in Mecklenburg County that ‘the community which assumed its form under his guiding hand, had the image of democratic republican liberty more fair than any sister settlement in all the south, perhaps in all of the United States’.⁷⁶ Charles A. Hanna wrote that Craighead ‘was the foremost American of his day advocating those principles of civil liberty under a republican form of government’.⁷⁷ The ministers who followed Craighead passed down these same ideals and established schools throughout North Carolina using them as bastions of republican ideology.

Pattillo ‘was a man of large public spirit and took a deep and active interest in all matter relating to the welfare of his state and nation’.⁷⁸ He steadfastly held to the republican ideal that the citizens of the country were the ultimate decision makers. As shown above, Pattillo greatly loved that the people ‘can elect or be elected into any office of your country’. Furthermore, he appreciated that the people in America ‘make the laws by which [they] are governed’.⁷⁹ He firmly believed God blessed America in being a democratic republic and encouraged his followers to ‘never forget the

⁷⁵ *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod, 1706-1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1904), p 165 and ‘An Address to the Ministers and Presbyterian congregations in North Carolina’, in *The Colonial Records of North Carolina, published under the supervision of the trustees of the public libraries, by order of the general assembly*, vol. X, ed. William L. Saunders, (Raleigh: Josephus Daniels, 1886), p. 224.

⁷⁶ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, pp. 192-193.

⁷⁷ Charles A. Hanna, *The Scotch-Irish: Or, the Scot in North Britain, North Ireland, and North America*, vol. II (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1902), p. 40.

⁷⁸ N.W. Walker, ‘Sketch of Pattillo’ in Henry Pattillo, *A Geographical Catechism*, eds. N.W. Walker and M.C.S. Noble (Chapel Hill, NC: The University Press, 1909), unnumbered.

⁷⁹ Pattillo, *The Plain Planter’s Family Assistant*, p. 7.

wonders God hath wrought for *your* country'.⁸⁰ This was key for Pattillo, as he believed that the government in America resided in 'the inhabitants of the happiest country under heaven'.⁸¹

Pattillo held a remarkably high view concerning the ideals of republicanism. For example, in his *A Geographical Catechism*, he wrote that the 'United Netherlands, commonly called the States of Holland. They were called Republics, but they had too much of Monarchy in the person of the Stadtholder, and too much of Aristocracy in their high and mighty Lords, the States-General, to deserve that name'.⁸² At the end of his discussion of Europe, the transition in his catechism stated that:

We come in the last place to the freest, happiest, most plentiful part of the globe; and the farthest removed from tyranny... a country in which the Laws rule, and no men; where life and property are in perfect security, and where the happy inhabitants may confide in those who legislate, in those who rule, and in those who judge; because they can remove them all at their pleasure.⁸³

Following the lead from Pattillo, McCorkle also promoted republican ideas throughout North Carolina. McCorkle, learning from Witherspoon, took a more moderate interpretation of the covenant and of Calvinist ideals. As Thomas Taylor noted, 'he cherished republican government; a typical Presbyterian, he considered the futures of the Church and the republic irrevocably intertwined'.⁸⁴ McCorkle championed civil republicanism causing dissent between he and others at the University of North Carolina, especially William Richardson Davie.

⁸⁰ Pattillo, *The Plain Planter's Family Assistant*, p. 7. [emphasis mine]

⁸¹ Pattillo, *The Plain Planter's Family Assistant*, p. 11.

⁸² Pattillo, *A Geographical Catechism*, p. 43.

⁸³ Pattillo, *A Geographical Catechism*, pp. 51-52.

⁸⁴ Thomas T. Taylor, 'Samuel E. McCorkle and a Christian Republic' in *American Presbyterians*, vol. 63, no. 4, (Winter, 1985), p. 377.

Like McCorkle, William Richardson Davie was a Presbyterian, albeit more moderate than McCorkle. Named after his uncle William Richardson, whom Foote described as:

The foster uncle of Davie, ministered in holy things... teaching the principles of the gospel independence, and inculcating those truths that made their hearers choose liberty, at the hazard of life, rather than oppression with abundance; all were eminent men, whose influence would have been felt in any generation... their congregations were famous during the struggle of the Revolution, for skirmishes, battles, loss of libraries, personal prowess, individual courage, and heroic women.⁸⁵

As a child, he studied at Queen's Museum in Charlotte, North Carolina and later at the College of New Jersey, graduating in 1776. Because he was away in New Jersey, he did not participate with the Committee of Safety in Mecklenburg County in May of 1775. However, he was an ardent supporter of liberty and led a cavalry for the 1st Mecklenburg Country Regiment of Militia and later played a vital role in the Battle of Charlotte in 1780.⁸⁶ After the war ended, Davie joined the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in May 1787. As a participant in the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, some considered him a Founding Father of the United States. Davie, along with Caldwell and McCorkle helped to establish the University of North Carolina and later elected governor of North Carolina. He died in 1820 at his home in Chester, South Carolina.⁸⁷

Robert Calhoun described how McCorkle and Davie 'agreed that religion and republicanism were integral and moderating structures of public life and higher

⁸⁵ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, p. 81.

⁸⁶ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, pp. 245-247 and C.L. Hunter, *Sketches of western North Carolina, historical and biographical: illustrating principally the Revolutionary period of Mecklenburg, Rowan, Lincoln, and adjoining counties, accompanied with miscellaneous information, much of it never before published* (Raleigh: The Raleigh News Steam Job Print, 1877), pp. 99-110, 126-136.

⁸⁷ Hunter, *Sketches of Western North Carolina*, p. 111.

education. Davie wanted to moderate the Christian republic by making it useful to society; McCorkle sought to moderate republican society by imbuing its leadership with Christian piety and moral discipline'.⁸⁸ In many regards, McCorkle followed in the steps of Rutherford more than others in his understanding concerning the role that people established governments foreordained by God. For example, in *A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness and Duty of the United States*, McCorkle preached equality of the covenant that 'God has done his part, but he will not do ours'.⁸⁹ Therefore, a sound republic required virtuous representation. For McCorkle and other leaders in North Carolina, virtuous meant Christian. The notion of republicanism entitled a body of citizens to vote and elect officers and representatives responsible to them and govern according to law. Pertaining to this, Gordon Wood has written that 'religion and republicanism would work hand in hand to create frugality, honesty, self-denial, and benevolence among the people... The city upon the hill assumed a new republican character'.⁹⁰ In a similar tone to Pattillo and McCorkle, Caldwell held a somewhat romantic view of republicanism. C.H. Wiley, recalling a conversation a friend of his had with Caldwell, noted that Caldwell said of the people of Alamance, where he served as pastor that they, not specifically Covenanters, were:

... intimately connected with the enjoyment of civil and religious freedom. They were mostly 'Scotch-Irish,' a race of men who, the work over, have been proved to be true to their country, to their friends, and their principles, which are always of a liberal cast. They are Presbyterians in religion, republicans in their political notions, and are ever ready to fight or go to the stake for their opinions. ... It is, sir, a remarkable and honourable fact, that ever one in my congregation, over ten years old, can read and

⁸⁸ Robert Calhoun, 'Ordered Liberty in the Southern Backcountry and the Middle-West' in the *Journal of Backcountry Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Fall, 2006), p. 11.

⁸⁹ Samuel S. McCorkle, *A Sermon on the Comparative Happiness and Duty of the United States, Contrasted with Other Nation, Particularly the Israelites; delivered in Salisbury, on Wednesday, February 18; and at Thyatira, on Thursday, February 19, 1795; Being the Day of General Thanksgiving and Prayer Appointed by the President of United States*, (Halifax, NC: Abraham Hodges, 1795), p. 33. Accessed *Early American Imprints*, Series 1, no. 29001. (2 March 2017)

⁹⁰ Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic*, p. 118.

write. ... Our people, as I have before intimated, would make excellent republicans, for there is among them a deep-rooted aversion, I may say detestation, of every species of tyranny, and an attachment to liberty – real, true, genuine, and well-regulated liberty – stronger than the love of life or the fear of death. They have virtues becoming citizens of a democracy.⁹¹

This conversation took place around 1772, as the opening of the text reads that this took place ‘some three-quarters of a century ago’, and the publishing of the book was 1847.⁹² The practice of representation was commonplace among Presbyterians.⁹³ As a result, this choice of ministers for themselves demanded representation in the church naturally manifested in the civil arena. Within the seventeenth-century Scottish context, the Protestors of the Protestor–Resolutioner Conflict adamantly called for the people of local parishes to determine who their minister ought to be.⁹⁴ For the American Covenanter, this was a precursor to the call for representation in their new republic.

John Witherspoon subscribed to Knox and Rutherford’s ideology regarding the public consensus about government. However, pertaining to matters in the church, in his rewriting of the *Westminster Confession* as commissioned by the Presbyterian Church in 1787, Witherspoon made refined, yet significant changes.⁹⁵ At the height of the Continental Congress completing and ratifying the Constitution of the United States, the Presbyterian Church called for the revision of the constitution of the Presbyterian Church in America. In this modification, Witherspoon revised the theocratic

⁹¹ C. H. (Calvin Henderson) Wiley, *Alamance, or, The great and final experiment* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1847), pp. 11-12.

⁹² Wiley, *Alamance, or, The great and final experiment*, p. 9.

⁹³ For a detailed analysis of this, see Gideon Mailer, ‘The Influence of the Scottish covenant on the “election” of representatives in the new American republic’ in *Parliaments, Estates, and Representation*, vol. 27, no. 1 (2007), pp. 57-76.

⁹⁴ Florence N. McCoy, *Robert Baillie and the Second Scots Reformation* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), chaps. 7-9.

⁹⁵ *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*, pp. 539-540 and 547-548.

understanding concerning the civil magistrate. The Synod of Philadelphia and New York specifically focused on chapters 20, 23, and 31 of the *Westminster Confession*. The final paragraph in chapter 20 of the original confession permitted the church and civil magistrate to provide censure for matters of discipline.⁹⁶ However, in the 1788 revision, the ministers removed the power from the state, and focused on the church alone.⁹⁷ Clearly, Witherspoon separated the powers of the church from the state. Furthermore, in chapter 31, the original confession permitted the civil magistrate to ‘lawfully call a synod of ministers, and other fit persons, to consult and advise with about matters of religion’.⁹⁸ Witherspoon removed this and inserted that the church ‘belongeth to the overseers and other rulers of particular churches’.⁹⁹ This same ideology found its way to North Carolina. Just as the notions of education from Knox and Rutherford transferred to North Carolina, so too did their ideas of representative government.

The Presbyterian leaders in North Carolina demanded virtuous representation, and they believed this occurred through sound education as shown previously. Knox commanded ministers in his *First Book of Discipline* that, ‘of necessity it is that your honours be most careful for the *virtuous* education and godly upbringing of the youth

⁹⁶ *The confession of faith and the larger and shorter catechisme first agreed upon by the Assembly of Divines at Westminster, and now appointed by the Generall Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland to be a part of uniformity in religion, between the Kirks of Christ in the three kingdomes*, ([Edinburgh]: Amsterdam, printed by Luice Elsever [i.e. Gideon Lithgow], for Andrew Wilson, and are to be sold at his shop in Edinburgh, 1649), p. 32. Accessed *Early English Books Online* on 25 January 2017, [Afterwards WCF, 1646].

⁹⁷ *The constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America containing the confession of faith, the catechisms, the government and discipline, and the directory for the worship of God, ratified and adopted by the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia, held at Philadelphia May the 16th 1788, and continued by adjournments until the 28th of the same month*, (Philadelphia: Printed by Thomas Bradford, 1789), p. 30. Accessed *Early American Imprints*, Series 1, no. 22079 (filmed) on 25 January 2017, [Afterwards WCF, 1788].

⁹⁸ WCF, 1646, p. 47.

⁹⁹ WCF, 1788, pp. 45-46.

of this realm'.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, the charter for Queen's College demanded that the ministers educated youth in order 'to imbibe the principles of Science and *virtue* ... to qualify them for the service of their friends and Country'.¹⁰¹ As the delegates from the Third Provincial Congress ascribed, 'that the people of this province... *are freely represented by persons chosen by themselves*; ... under the Sanction of *virtue*, honor, and the sacred Love of Liberty, and our Country'.¹⁰² In each component, virtue meant Christian. Moreover, as Byrd noted in his definition of republicanism that it 'at least included a firm belief in virtue and liberty'.¹⁰³ However, as Gideon Mailer pointed out, 'the Presbyterian Church referred to the Church as "reformed, always reforming" just as the United States Constitution would contain the mechanism for change by means of alteration through ratification'.¹⁰⁴

Ratification of the US Constitution

Robert Emery pointed out that the concept of republicanism for the Covenanters was led by God and not necessarily by the people. Some of the Covenanters demonstrated this when they later opposed the US Constitution.¹⁰⁵ The Covenanters opposed the US Constitution as they 'viewed the Constitution as an impious, infidel, and atheistic

¹⁰⁰ Knox, *First Book of Discipline*, pp. 295. [emphasis mine]

¹⁰¹ 'Act of the North Carolina General Assembly concerning Queen's College', pp. 486-487. [emphasis mine]

¹⁰² 'Minutes of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina', pp. 171-172. [emphasis mine]

¹⁰³ Byrd, *Sacred Scripture*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ Mailer, 'The Influence of the Scottish covenant on the "election" of representatives in the new American republic', p. 59. For a complete examination concerning the ratification debates in North Carolina, please see: Jonathan Elliot, ed. *The Debates of the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution*, vol. IV, (Washington: Printed for the Editor, 1836), pp. 1-252. [Hereafter *Debates*]; Pauline Maier, *Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution, 1787-1788*, (New York: Simon and Schuster Paperbacks, 2010), pp. 401-434; and Albert Ray Newsome, 'North Carolina's Ratification of the Federal Constitution' in *The North Carolina Historical Review*, vol. 17, no. 4, (October 1940), pp. 287-301.

¹⁰⁵ Robert Emery, 'Church and State in the Early Republic: The Covenanters' Radical Critique', pp. 493-496. He noted that the three reasons for the Covenanters objection to the Constitution were – 1.) 'The fundamental constitutional authority was not in the people; it was the divine mediator Jesus Christ' 2.) the constitution's failure to 'recognize the existence of God' and 3.) the 'godless constitution was, in covenanter eyes, the approbation of human slavery'.

document owing to what they perceived as its failure to acknowledge God, to submit to the kingship of Christ, or to recognize the Bible as the nation's law-book'.¹⁰⁶

William Glasgow romantically declared:

To stigmatize Covenanters as 'anti-government people' is unjust and untrue, and they are only objects of derision because their accusers are total ignorant of their principles. They are heartily in favor of *government*, and the *republican form of government*, and only object to the Constitution for is *omission to acknowledge the source* from which all government comes.¹⁰⁷

Just as the idea of 'reformed, always reforming' justified ratification, it also warranted opposition. The Covenanters, like many other supporters of the Revolution, split over the best constitutional sentiment. As previously mentioned, Witherspoon recognised Knox and Rutherford's ideology regarding the public consensus, and he enthusiastically supported the ratification of the US Constitution. Again, Witherspoon modified the theocratic understanding concerning the civil magistrate in the Presbyterian Church's new constitution. Through the separation of powers of the church from the state, Witherspoon justified ratifying the US Constitution prior to the establishment of the Bill of Rights. Just as McCorkle and Davie divided concerning the place of religion in education, so too were like-minded Presbyterians split over the ratification of the US Constitution. Many of the more moderate Presbyterians throughout eastern North Carolina were Federalists and supported the Constitution's ratification, but many of the radical Presbyterian leaders from the backcountry of North Carolina led the Anti-Federalist charge in the ratification debates for the US Constitution.¹⁰⁸ Regarding North Carolina's involvement in the ratification of the

¹⁰⁶ David Ritchie, 'Radical Orthodoxy: Irish Covenanters and American Slavery, circa 1830-1865 in *Church History* 82, no 4, (Dec. 2013), p. 830.

¹⁰⁷ W. Melancthon Glasgow, *History of the Reformed Presbyterian Church in America: with Sketches of all Her Ministry, Congregations, Missions, Institutions, Publication, Etc., and embellished with over fifty portraits and engravings* (Baltimore: Hill and Harvey Publishers, 1888), pp. 66-67.

¹⁰⁸ *Debates*, pp. 1-252.

Constitution, Albert Newsome noted, 'North Carolina has no claim for leadership in political revolution'.¹⁰⁹ The primary cause for this was North Carolina's lack of equal representation throughout the state in the convention between the Federalist and Anti-Federalists.

The Federalists promoted a strong central government. The moniker for Anti-Federalist pertained primarily to those who opposed a stronger central government, and they believed this promoted monarchy and jettisoned the voice of the people, thus reducing individual liberty. On a broad scale, the ratification debate was between the eastern North Carolina aristocrats and the western North Carolina small farmers. Because of this, the Anti-Federalists had a larger constituency in the ratification debates, thus prompting the defeat of ratification in North Carolina. However, this all seemed for naught since the new US Constitution received adoption when the Federal Convention already received enough support from 10 states. As a result, technically, North Carolina remained outside the Union. Because of the Anti-Federalist majority, the leader, Willie Jones called for an immediate vote.¹¹⁰ Yet, James Iredell persuaded the convention to discuss the new US Constitution clause by clause.¹¹¹ A representative from the backcountry of North Carolina and one of the chief opponents to its ratification was the educator and minister David Caldwell.

Caldwell stood as an Anti-Federalist. He immediately caused an uproar on the second day of the ratification debates on 24 July 1788 by calling for the delegates to compare the US Constitution to all 'rules or maxims as ought to be the fundamental principles

¹⁰⁹ Newsome, 'North Carolina's Ratification of the Federal Constitution', p. 288.

¹¹⁰ Maier, *Ratification*, pp. 405-410.

¹¹¹ Maier, *Ratification*, pp. 410-411 and Newsome, 'North Carolina's Ratification of the Federal Constitution', p. 293.

of every free government'.¹¹² Recognising that this was a daunting task, Caldwell relented and permitted the debates to continue. However, his objection to the opening of the preamble of the Constitution stating 'We the people' became the matter for which he received recognition. He argued the 'people' had not empowered the Federal Convention through election; therefore, the Convention was not representative of the people.¹¹³ In addition, Caldwell called for the addition of a Bill of Rights to the US Constitution for the protection of the people. This debate of equal representation for all people in Caldwell's case was emblematic of covenanting ideology. According to Shields, an absolute monarch 'cannot be limited by laws, ... but only regulated by the Royal lust'.¹¹⁴ So, in response, he further contended, agreeing with Stewart's *Jus Populi* that a limited or constitutional government established by the people helps to prevent magistrates, whether superior or lesser from collapsing into tyranny. Shields, using Psalm 137 and Isaiah 43 asserted that 'this proves that people to be superior in dignity'. He further contended that the people are:

Superior in power: because every constituent cause is superior to the effect, the people is the constituent cause, the king is the effect, and hath all his Royalty from them, by the Conveyence God hath appointed; ... Hence, if the people constitute & limit the power they give the King, then they may call him to an account, and judge him for the abuse of it.¹¹⁵

The radical Presbyterians later opposed the Constitution because it neglected to establish the federal headship of God as the supreme law of the land, which was manifest in the people.¹¹⁶ They did not call for a state religion, but their ideology within the covenant between God and man was priority over the covenant between man and nation or kingdom. In light of this, covenanting tradition believed that the

¹¹² *Debates*, p. 7.

¹¹³ *Debates*, pp. 15-16.

¹¹⁴ Shields, *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 163.

¹¹⁵ Shields, *A Hind Let Loose*, p. 391.

¹¹⁶ *Debates*, p. 187-223.

temporal and eternal ought to remain conjoined in order that the temporal remained subject to the eternal. William Glasgow, in his introduction to Craighead's *Renewal of the Covenants* summarised the Covenanters' perspective on their opposition to the Constitution by writing:

But when the newly-born nation ignored the God of battles, rejected the authority of the Prince of the kings of the earth, and refused to administer the government in accordance with the requirements of the Divine Law, then the same loyal Covenanters, faithful to their principles and consistent with their history through all the struggles of the centuries, dissented from the Constitution of the United States".¹¹⁷

Through the Covenanters challenging the Constitution's validity and pressing against the Federalist in the ratification debates, the Covenanters actually helped to solidify the aim and purpose of the US Constitution, which ultimately led to its ratification. Although the convention 'thought proper neither to ratify nor reject the Constitution proposed for the government of the United States',¹¹⁸ the state of North Carolina later ratified in November 1789.

Covenanting tradition clearly affected education throughout North Carolina with the promotion of catechising, the implementation of several schools and academies, and the founding of the University of North Carolina. As president of the College of New Jersey, known as the 'seminary of sedition', Witherspoon influenced a considerable number of men who founded or led universities throughout the colonies.¹¹⁹ However, North Carolina felt the influence from the College of New Jersey through the

¹¹⁷ Alexander Craighead, *Renewal of the Covenants, National and Solemn League; A Confession of Sins; and Engagement to Duties; and a testimony; As they were carried on at Middle Octorara in Pennsylvania, November 11, 1743. Together with an introductory preface*, edited by William M. Glasgow, ([Beaver Falls, PA: NP, 1895], Edmonton: Reprinted by SWRB, 1996), p. 4.

¹¹⁸ *Debates*, p. 251.

¹¹⁹ For a complete analysis of Witherspoon's contribution see Gideon Mailer, *John Witherspoon's American Revolution: Enlightenment and Religion from the Creation of Britain to the Founding of the United States*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

leadership of men such as Pattillo, Caldwell, and Alexander before Witherspoon was its president. Although the College of New Jersey was the 'seminary of sedition' under the leadership of Witherspoon, the covenanter ideals of resistance and revolution were present well beforehand. Regardless, the evidence provided clearly demonstrated that ministers in North Carolina elevated the importance of education, and as a result, covenanting thought and ideology flourished in the backcountry of North Carolina. Likewise, the same men who established institutions of higher learning also contributed to the establishment of a new republican government in North Carolina. Because of their egalitarian interpretation, the radical Presbyterians emphasised that governments although ordained by God, transpired through the community. This naturally welcomed the republican ideals of representation.

Chapter 8 – Inconsistent

Restricted Liberty for the Enslaved

Presbyterians and those of the covenanting tradition were ardent advocates and proponents for freedom from tyranny and oppressive governments and made many renewals and declarations for the purpose of independence. The counter-balance to their advocacy for independence and their action for it in battle was their inaction through keeping people enslaved. A glaring stain on the legacy of the American Covenanters in North Carolina was their failure to denounce and eradicate the oppression and institution of slavery. The Episcopalian James Iredell summarised the problems of reconciling the challenge freedom and slavery presented across the religious spectrum when he declared:

For my part, were it practicable to put an end to the importation of slaves immediately, it would give me the greatest pleasure; for it certainly is a trade utterly inconsistent with the rights of humanity, and under which great cruelties have been exercised. When the entire abolition of slavery takes place, it will be an event which must be pleasing to every generous mind, and every friend of human nature; but we often wish for things which are not attainable. It was the wish of a great majority of the Convention to put an end to the trade immediately.¹

The hard work of families and various ideals guided the founding of the United States. Yet, the beginnings of the United States and its founding began on the backs of the enslaved. Like the Founding Fathers, many who held to covenanting tradition struggled with the consequences of slavery, and they continually made compromises regarding slavery. The Covenanters' struggle with their inconsistency requires explanation. This chapter briefly

¹ Jonathan Elliot, *The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution, as recommended by the General Convention at Philadelphia in 1787. Together with the Journal of the Federal Convention, Luther Martin's letter, Yate's minutes, Congressional opinions, Virginia and Kentucky resolutions of '98-'99, and other illustrations of the Constitution*. Vol. IV (Washington: Printed for the Editor, 1836) p. 100. James Iredell was a Federalist leader in North Carolina during the debates for the ratification of the U.S. Constitution and later became one of the first justices of the Supreme Court. See Don Higginbotham, 'James Iredell, Sr.' in the *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 2. ed. William S. Powell (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), pp. 253-255.

examines how covenanting ministers in the backcountry of Virginia and North Carolina confronted the dilemma of slavery during and after the American Revolution.

Some historians noted that Presbyterians in America opposed slavery, but much of this points to the early nineteenth century.² For example, Colin Kidd pointed out how the Reformed Presbyterians in America used their political force to serve ‘as a radical conscience, criticizing a constitution which legitimized slavery’.³ Joseph Moore, in his book *Founding Sins*, demonstrated how the Covenanters opposed the Constitution because it protected slavery.⁴ However, all of the evidence from the early nineteenth century failed to detail the case of the North Carolina Covenanters in the late eighteenth century. Many in North Carolina leading up to, during, and after the Revolution were slaveholders. This demonstrated a blatant inconsistency within the Covenanter tradition. By the early nineteenth century, as Kidd and Moore pointed out, the Reformed Presbyterian Church was enthusiastic for the abolition of slavery as evidenced in the *Minutes of the Reformed Presbytery* in February 1801, where they declared:

The consideration of the state of the enslaved Africans was introduced this day into the Committee. The purport of thh [sic] discussion was to ascertain whether those who concurred, more or less, in the enslavement of these miserable subjects, should be considered as entitled to communion in this church. It was unanimously agreed that enslaving these, our African brethren, is an evil of enormous magnitude, and that none who continue in such a gross

² Of recent scholarship, the best work that examines these questions and struggles pertaining to the relationship of slavery and Presbyterianism please see the edited volume by William Harrison Taylor and Peter C. Messer, eds. *Faith and Slavery in the Presbyterian Diaspora, Studies in Eighteenth-Century American and the Atlantic World* (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2016) and Joseph S. Moore, ‘Covenanters and Antislavery in the Atlantic World’ in *Slavery & Abolition* 34, no 4, (2013), pp. 539-561.

³ Colin Kidd, ‘Conditional Britons: The Scots Covenanting Tradition and the Eighteenth-Century British State’, in *The English Historical Review* 117, no. 474 (Nov. 2002), p. 1175.

⁴ Joseph S. Moore, *Founding Sins: How a Group of Antislavery Radicals Fought to Put Christ into the Constitution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), p. 88.

departure from humanity and the dictates of our benevolent religion, can have any just title to communion in this church.⁵

Likewise, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1818 equally condemned slavery:

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, having taken into consideration the subject of slavery, think proper to make known their sentiments upon it to the churches and people under their care. We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another, as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature; as utterly *inconsistent* with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbour as ourselves; and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the Gospel of Christ, when enjoin that, ‘all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.’⁶

This same meeting of the Presbyterian ministers also asserted:

It is manifestly the duty of all Christians who enjoy the light of the present day, when the *inconsistency of slavery*, both with the dictates of humanity and religion, has been demonstrated, and is generally seen and acknowledged, to use their honest, earnest, and unwearied endeavours, to correct the errors of former times, and as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and if possible throughout the world.⁷

These statements condemning slavery from the Presbyterians were post-revolution. So, when did the Presbyterians in North Carolina recognise this inconsistency? Additional questions require examination, such as, how was one who is in covenant with God and others able to justify holding people in captivity? Likewise, what role did the Covenanters play for the enslaved in North Carolina? The aim of this chapter seeks to answer these questions and demonstrate how the Covenanters confronted the dilemma of slavery during this period.

⁵ ‘Minutes of the Reformed Presbytery’ in *Our Banner, A Monthly Magazine, Devoted to the Principles of The Reformed Presbyterian Church, “For Christ’s Crown and Covenant.”* Vol. 3, eds. J.C.K. Milligan, J.H. Boggs, and David Gregg, (New York: Christian Statesman Association, 1876), p. 392.

⁶ *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States of America from its organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 inclusive* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1847), p. 692. [italics mine] [Hereafter *Minutes*]

⁷ *Minutes*, p. 692.

In the earliest tradition of covenanting thought, Scottish Covenanters believed that holding others captive was tyranny and ought not to occur. Samuel Rutherford and others in Scotland argued that slavery was against nature and therefore a sin against God. Rutherford, referring to Fernando Vázquez de Menchaca's understanding of natural law, asserted that all men were equal in his *Lex, Rex* (Q. II), he wrote:

The law saith there is no law of nature agreeing to all living creatures for superiority; for by no reason in nature hath a boar dominion over a boar, a lion over a lion, a dragon over a dragon, a bull over a bull: and if all men be born equally free, as I hope to prove, there is no reason in nature why one man should be king and lord over another;...⁸

Although Rutherford's work was primarily a treatise on the Presbyterian understanding of politics and governance, he doubly asserted the importance of the social contract and declared that 'servitude is contrary to nature'.⁹ He later stressed this in *Lex, Rex* (Q. XIII) by making the distinction that slavery was a result of Original Sin, therefore making it a sin. Rutherford said:

Slavery of servants to lords or masters, such as were of old amongst the Jews, is not natural, but against nature. 1. Because slavery is *malum naturæ*, a penal evil and contrary to nature, and a punishment of sin. 2. Slavery should not have been in the world, if man had never sinned, no more than there could have been buying and selling of men, which is a miserable consequent of sin and a sort of death, when men are put to the toiling pains of the hireling, who longeth for the shadow, and under iron harrows and saws, and to hew wood, and draw water continually.¹⁰

The Covenanters throughout Scotland held to this understanding as evidenced with Alexander Shields. Agreeing with Rutherford, while he made the clear distinction between

⁸ Samuel Rutherford, *Lex, Rex, or the Law and the Prince; a Dispute for the Just Prerogative of King and People: Containing the Reasons and Causes of the Most Necessary Defensive Wars of the Kingdom of Scotland, and of Their Expedition for the Aid and Help of Their Dear Brethren of England; in which Their Innocency is Asserted, and a Full Answer is Given to a Seditious Pamphlet, Entituled, "Sacro-sancta Regum Majestas," or the Sacred and Royal Prerogative of Christian Kings; under the name of J.A., but Penned by John Maxwell ... In forty-four Questions*. [London: 1644] (Colorado Springs, CO: Portage Publications, 2009), p. 3. [Afterwards referred to as *Lex, Rex*].

⁹ *Lex, Rex*, p. 92.

¹⁰ *Lex, Rex*, p. 94.

the hired servant and the slave in his work *A Hind Let Loose*, Shields noted also that slavery was a sin:

Slavery, being against nature, rational people would never choose that life, if they could help it; ... Slavery would make their condition worse than when they had no government, for liberty is always preferable; neither could people have acted rationally in setting up government, if to be free of oppression of others they have given themselves up to slavery, under a master who may do what he pleases with them. ... *Slavery is not natural, but a penal fruit of sin, and would never have been if sin had not been.*¹¹

Preceding Rutherford and Shields, George Buchanan argued in *De Jure Regni apud Scotos* that 'Regal government is conformable, and tyranny contrary, to nature; a king rules over a willing, a tyrant over a reluctant people; royalty is a freeman's authority over freemen – tyranny a master's over his slaves'.¹² Out of this rationale and theology, covenanting tradition historically opposed slavery as an act of tyranny. Yet, somehow the ministers, elders, and civic leaders in North Carolina enslaved people and permitted slavery.

Many of the ministers, elders, and civic leaders in North Carolina examined throughout this thesis were slaveholders. Based on the first census of the United States commissioned by Thomas Jefferson in 1790, North Carolina ranked fifth out of the thirteen original states in terms of the slave population to the total population with 25.54%. This was a ratio of one to four.¹³ However, when examining the percentage of enslaved to whites only, rather than the total population, the percentage increased by almost ten percent to 34.90%, which was the ratio of one slave to every three whites. In both perspectives, this was greater than the

¹¹ Alexander Shields, *A Hind Let Loose, or, An historical representation of the testimonies of the Church of Scotland for the interest of Christ with the true state thereof in all its periods : together with a vindication of the present testimonie, against the Popish, prelatical, & malignant enemies of that church ... : wherein several controversies of greatest consequence are enquired into, and in some measure cleared, concerning hearing of the curats, owning of the present tyrannie, taking of ensnaring oaths & bonds, frequenting of field meetings, defensive resistance of tyrannical violence ... / by a lover of true liberty*, (np, 1687)., p. 385. [Italics mine]

¹² George Buchanan, *De Jure Regni apud Scotos; a dialogue concerning the rights of the crown in Scotland*, trans. Robert MacFarlan [reprint of 1799 edition]. (Colorado Springs: Portage Publications, Inc. 2009), p. 39.

¹³ *U.S. Census, 1790: Heads of Families, at the First Census of the United States taken in the year 1790 – North Carolina* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908)

national average of 17.76% and 21.99% respectively.¹⁴ Specifically examining Mecklenburg County, the percentage of enslaved to the total population was less than the national average at 14.07%, which was a ratio of one to seven. Again, shifting to look at the percentage of enslaved to whites only, rather than the total population, this increased to 16.49%, which was a ratio of one slave to every six whites.¹⁵ Slavery was prevalent in North Carolina immediately after the Revolution and further examination of the census showed that almost one quarter of the Scots-Irish families owned a considerable number of the enslaved people in Mecklenburg County.¹⁶ Specific to the ministers, elders, and civic leaders studied throughout this thesis, 26 who were still living in 1790 owned 265 enslaved people. Of the 265 enslaved, 158 were in Mecklenburg County.¹⁷

For the ministers and families that travelled down to North Carolina in the 1750s, evidence from wills, inventories, and various minutes showed that they enslaved people. For example, Samuel Davies, minister who travelled south from Pennsylvania, but remained in Virginia held slaves.¹⁸ However, his treatment of his enslaved people was unlike many others. His reputation in Virginia was as a campaigner for the rights of religious dissenters and Presbyterians. In addition, Davies led enthusiastically in ‘the awakening of people of African origin and ancestry’ that ‘was unusual in its intensity and scope’.¹⁹ He utilised his leadership in Virginia and later at the College of New Jersey for the purposes of obtaining materials for

¹⁴ *U.S. Census, 1790*, p. 8. This was the total of the United States plus the SW and N Territories.

See Appendix 1.

¹⁵ *U.S. Census, 1790*, p. 10.

¹⁶ *U.S. Census, 1790*, pp. 158-164.

¹⁷ *U.S. Census, 1790*, pp. 64-178. I examined the census for the men studied and discovered that many were still living in North Carolina at the 1790 Census. Please see appendix 2 for the table of this research. Ten of the individuals researched were deceased, or there was no record found.

¹⁸ J. Earl Thompson, Jr., ‘Slavery and Presbyterianism in the Revolutionary Era’ in the *Journal of Presbyterian History* (1962-1985), vol. 54, no. 1, Presbyterians and the American Revolution: An Interpretive Account (Spring, 1976), p. 124.

¹⁹ Jeffrey H. Richards, ‘Samuel Davies and the Transatlantic Campaign for Slave Literacy in Virginia’ in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 111, no. 4 (2003), p. 333.

those who were unable to afford them, especially for enslaved people.²⁰ Although not outspoken about the eradication of the system of slavery in America, Davies was a frontrunner in the education and conversion of the enslaved.²¹ Davies directly influenced other Presbyterian leaders in North Carolina, such as Alexander Craighead, Samuel McCorkle, Henry Pattillo, and David Caldwell, and like Davies, all were slave owners. According to the records reviewed, only Pattillo and Caldwell followed in Davies steps and educated their slaves.

Alexander Craighead was inconsistent with his unyielding cry against tyranny while also being a slaveholder. According to his will dated 9 April 1765, he bequeathed to his wife Jane, ‘the benefit of my plantation where I now live and my plantation upon longcreek & the whole of it thereof and likewise use & benefit of all the negroes I now possess for the support of my family during the time she bears my name’.²² Later in his will, Craighead bequeathed ‘sixty pounds hard money or one negroe’ to his four unmarried daughters, Jane, Rachel, Mary, and Elizabeth. Margaret and Agness were already married and not bequeathed any enslaved people.

Samuel McCorkle demonstrated his inconsistency by enslaving people while he continued preaching for charity towards one another and joining in the patriot cause for independence.²³

²⁰ Samuel Davies, ‘Copy of a Letter from Rev. Mr. Davies at Hanover in Virginia to J.F. [Joseph Forfitt] April 1, 1755’. In *Letters from the Rev. Samuel Davies, &c. Shewing The State of Religion (particularly among Negroes) in Virginia. Likewise An Extract of a Letter from a Gentleman in London to his Friend in the Country, Being some Observations on the foregoing* (London: N.P., 1757), p. 4.

²¹ George W. Pilcher, *Samuel Davies, Apostle of Dissent in Colonial Virginia* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1971) and Richards, ‘Samuel Davies and the Transatlantic Campaign’, p. 336.

²² Book A, Will Books, Office of Superior Court, Mecklenburg County, 167-168. C.R. 065.801.14

²³ Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, *A Charity Sermon. First Delivered in Salisbury, July 28; And Afterwards in Other Places in Rowan, and the Counties Adjoining; Particularly at Sugar's Creek, in Mecklenburg County, at the Opening of the Synod of the Carolinas, October 2: And Last, at the Meeting of the Hon. the General Assembly of North Carolina in Fayetteville, December 1793.* (Halifax: Abraham Hodge, 1795); In a letter written to Ephraim Steel in Pennsylvania on 30 July 1778, McCorkle showed his position regarding the Revolutionary War, where he wrote: ‘I can’t but abruptly break out into the congratulating of your state, on

According to the *US Census of 1790*, McCorkle had six slaves. Likewise, in a letter written to William Sprague, Eli Caruthers recalled that McCorkle ‘had also a number of servants,—the patrimony of his wife... but they were indolent and thievish, and he was indulgent to a fault’.²⁴ Caruthers gave an example of this indulgence and wrote that once McCorkle neglected to notice his slaves stopped ploughing and went to sleep while the horses grazed because he was so engrossed in his personal studies.²⁵

Henry Pattillo further demonstrated an example of the inconsistency within covenanting tradition in North Carolina. Like Craighead, he was an ardent proponent of independence. He served as the chaplain and later chairman of the Provincial Congresses in North Carolina that called for independence. The US Census showed no records for the Pattillo family. However, in his will dated 15 June 1782, he left for his wife and executors ‘to judge, whether the two negro girls now in the possession of my son in law Richard Harrison and Robert Samer can be spared and continued in their service or whether they must be returned to assist in raising and educating my children’.²⁶ In his will, dated 19 December 1800, he had a slave named Peter, which he actually did not own, but rather ‘paid for by subscription of kind friends’.²⁷ He noted that ‘if the subscribers should demand their money, the negro must be sold and

your deliverance from a barbarous foe. I hope you will pursue the advantage you gained ‘till they are driven from the northern department ... We shall endeavor to expel them from the southern department’. Quoted in William Randolph Enger, ‘Samuel Eusebius McCorkle: North Carolina Educator’ (EdD dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1973), p. 113.

²⁴ William B. Sprague, ‘Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, D.D., 1774-1811’ in *Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations, From the Early Settlement of the Country to the Close of the Year Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-Five. With Historical Introductions* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1858), p. 349.

²⁵ Sprague, ‘Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, D.D., 1774-1811’, p. 349.

²⁶ Last Will and Testament of Henry Pattillo, 15 June 1782, Box 1, Folder 1/13, Personal Papers of Henry Pattillo, 1726-1801, Williams Smith Morton Library, Archives and Special Collections, Union Presbyterian Seminary.

²⁷ Last Will and Testament of Henry Pattillo, 19 December 1800, Box 1, Folder 1/14, Personal Papers of Henry Pattillo, 1726-1801, Williams Smith Morton Library, Archives and Special Collections, Union Presbyterian Seminary.

payment made; if not, I give and bequeath Negro Peter to my son John Pattillo, and to his heirs forever'.²⁸ The 1800 will made no mention of the two girls listed in the 1782 will.

David Caldwell was another example of a minister who enslaved people in North Carolina. He married Rachel, Alexander Craighead's daughter, who as shown previously, bequeathed her a slave. Unknown as to whether she accepted the slave or the 'sixty pounds hard money', but according to the *US Census of 1790*, David Caldwell, residing in Guilford County at the time, owned eight slaves.²⁹ The evidence clearly showed that these ministers and civic leaders in North Carolina owned or held slaves. Though some did not specifically identify with being Covenanters or members of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, they held to covenanting tradition. Their slave ownership was a direct contradiction to Rutherford and others who held that slavery was against nature and a sin.

Of the five civic and militia leaders active in the Presbyterian Church shown previously in this thesis, only one did not enslave people—Zaccheus Wilson. Of the 152 enslaved listed above, the four civic leaders owned 122. Thomas Polk, who served as Colonel for the Mecklenburg County Regiment of Militia, signer of the Mecklenburg Resolves, and a delegate at the Third Provincial Congress, enslaved forty-seven people.³⁰ William R. Davie, Governor of North Carolina and one of the founders of the University of North Carolina, enslaved thirty-six people.³¹ Waightstill Avery, the first Attorney General for North Carolina held twenty-four people.³² Finally, Robert Irwin, delegate from Mecklenburg County in the Fourth and Fifth Provincial Congresses and later elected to the NC Senate, owned six

²⁸ Last Will and Testament of Henry Pattillo, 19 December 1800.

²⁹ *U.S. Census, 1790*, p. 152.

³⁰ *U.S. Census, 1790*, p. 159.

³¹ *U.S. Census, 1790*, p. 64.

³² *U.S. Census, 1790*, p. 107.

people.³³ A relatively small number (3) of these were moderately large slaveholders. All these men were active participants with their Presbyterian Churches and in the patriot cause in North Carolina. They heard the teaching of ministers and elders who followed in covenanting tradition but were equally inconsistent in their call for independence whilst keeping people bound in slavery. How then was slavery justified by the ministers and elders in the backcountry of North Carolina as well as the same men who called and fought for independence?

Justification for Slavery

Common for this period, the leaders and ministers throughout North Carolina enslaved people; however, they were conversely opposed to the continued importation of people for the purposes of slavery. As such, this inconsistency required justification for keeping enslaved people. For the Covenanters, one doctrine that helped to promote the just cause for revolution against tyranny became a rationalisation for slavery – the two-kingdoms doctrine. The primary aim of this doctrine, as Robert Emery defined, was ‘the equality and mutual independence of church and state, with each acting in a coordinated capacity to further divine mandates of Christ Jesus, king of both church and state alike’.³⁴ However, a secondary understanding of the two-kingdoms doctrine was the separation of the eternal from the temporal. Out of this understanding, North Carolina Covenanters justified slavery. Some ministers believed God permitted their suffering and the life dealt to the enslaved people, and they needed to endure this temporal suffering as Jesus suffered throughout his life and the

³³ *U.S. Census, 1790*, p. 159.

³⁴ Robert Emery, ‘Church and State in the Early Republic: The Covenanters’ Radical Critique’, *Journal of Law and Religion* 25, no. 2 (2009-2010), pp. 487-488.

cross.³⁵ For example, Davies argued that regardless of one's current position in life, one was only truly free because of their salvation as he wrote:

...a Christian may be happy, even in the State of Slavery. Liberty, the sweetest and most valuable of all Blessings, is no essential to his Happiness: for if he is destitute of civil Liberty, he enjoys a Liberty still more noble and divine: "He is the Lord's free Man." The Son hath made him free from Tyranny of Sin and Satan; and therefore he is free indeed.³⁶

Just in these few lines, one can grasp how covenanting thought justified slavery as a temporal suffering while being eternally free. Although Davies' ministry was in Virginia, his interpretation was equally ubiquitous in North Carolina.

Davies's student, Henry Pattillo in North Carolina endorsed similar views regarding temporal suffering and eternal liberty, but he also wrote a catechism for the slave's education in order to promote the same interpretation among enslaved people. Pattillo wrote *The Plain Planter's Family Assistant* to provide help and instruction to 'heads of families' concerning how to lead families and servants. In it, Pattillo wrote two catechisms, one for children, and the other for the enslaved. In 'The Negroes Catechism', questions 39 through 42 focused on the position of the slave to their master and to God. Question 39 asked, 'Which do you think the happier person, the master, or the slave?' The response provided by Pattillo established that the master was happier than the slave was. The following question asked the slave, 'Do you ever think you are happier than he?'³⁷ The lengthy response declared:

yes: when I come in from my work; eat my hearty supper, worship my maker; lie down without care on my mind; sleep sound; get up in the morning strong and fresh; and hear that my master could not sleep, for thinking on his debts, and his taxes; and how he shall provide

³⁵ Jeffrey Robert Young, *Proslavery and Sectional Thought in the Early South, 1740–1829, An Anthology* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2006); Henry Pattillo, *The Plain Planter's Family Assistant; containing an address to husbands and wives, children and servants. With some helps for instruction by catechisms; and examples of devotion for families: with a brief paraphrase on the Lord's prayer* (Wilmington, DE: James Adams, 1787); and Samuel Davies, *The Duty of Christians to Propagate their Religion among Heathens, earnestly recommended to the Masters of Negroe Slaves in Virginia. A Sermon Preached in Hanover, January 8, 1757* (London: J. Oliver in Bartholomew–Close, 1758), pp. 17–18.

³⁶ Davies, *The Duty of Christians to Propagate their Religion among Heathens*, p. 20.

³⁷ Pattillo, *The Plain Planter's Family Assistant*, p. 50.

victuals and clothes for his family, or what he shall do for them when they are sick – then I bless God that He has placed me in my humble station; I pity my master, and feel myself happier than he is.³⁸

The following two questions and responses were much more direct to the justification of slavery as question 41, responding to the previous question, asked, ‘Then it seems every body (*sic*) is best, just where God placed them?’ The slave’s response, specific to the temporal suffering, was ‘Yes: The Scriptures say, if I am called, being a slave, I am not to care for it; for every true Christian, is Christ’s free man, whether he be bond or free in this world’. Subsequently, the catechism asked, ‘How can you be free and bound both?’ Of which the response given stated that ‘If Jesus Christ has broke (*sic*) the chain of sin, and freed me from the curse of the law, and the slavery of the devil, I am free indeed, although my body and services may be at the command of another’.³⁹ Others throughout North Carolina were familiar with this interpretation. This interpretation actually introduced another layer of inconsistency for the Covenanters. These same arguments used to justify slavery rightly interpreted warranted non-resistance on the part of the Covenanters. Yet, the Covenanters justified their rebellion against the tyranny of the monarchy all the while vindicating slavery. So then, what possible role did the Covenanters actually play for the enslaved in North Carolina?

Role Covenanters played for the enslaved in North Carolina

Covenanting thought evolved in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century and knew well that slavery must end, but there was no solution.⁴⁰ For example, Pattillo in *The Plain Planter’s Family Assistant* wrote that slavery was a ‘wicked branch of trade’ and that

³⁸ Pattillo, *The Plain Planter’s Family Assistant*, p. 50.

³⁹ Pattillo, *The Plain Planter’s Family Assistant*, p. 50.

⁴⁰ *Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America: embracing the Minutes of the General Presbytery and General Synod, 1706-1788* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath-School Work, 1904), pp. 456-60. [Hereafter *Records*]

‘conscientious or prudential motives have pretty generally prevailed among us, to discourage the importation of slaves’.⁴¹ However, he offered no other solution. In the same year that Pattillo published *The Plain Planter’s Family Assistant*, the Synod of New York and Philadelphia striving for a solution adopted a policy calling ‘to procure eventually the final abolition of slavery in America’.⁴² This policy demanded that education was the means through which the liberation and abolition of slavery must occur. The emphasis on education and paternalism steered much of the validation in North Carolina for slavery. For some covenanting ministers prior to and during the American Revolution, educating those enslaved was a vital component of their ministry.

Again, looking to Samuel Davies in Virginia, he was adamant about the education of his slaves. Davies indicated, in a letter written to a contributor of books from London, that the enslaved and poor in Virginia were obtaining liberty because of their education and conversion. However, this so-called liberty was eternal and not temporal. Davies wrote, ‘many of the most wretched part of mankind,... are likely to be advanced, by your means, from a state of Slavery, Barbarism, and exposedness to everlasting Misery, to the glorious Liberty, the divine Refinements, and the everlasting Happiness of the Sons of God’.⁴³ Davies elaborated how this ‘liberty’ was due not only to their conversion, but to their education and literacy. Although Davies was not advocating the literal freedom for those enslaved in Virginia, this notion of educating enslaved people as a means to liberty planted a seed for many in the Presbyterian Church in America later.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Pattillo, *The Plain Planter’s Family Assistant*, p. 23.

⁴² *Records*, p. 540.

⁴³ Davies, ‘Extract of a Letter from Rev. Mr. Davies at Hanover in Virginia to Mr. R.C. Dated Feb. 7, 1757, p. 19-21

⁴⁴ For further detailed account concerning this, see Jeffrey H. Richards, ‘Samuel Davies and the Transatlantic Campaign for Slave Literacy in Virginia’ in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 111, no 4. (2003), pp. 333-378.

In North Carolina, Pattillo was a keen supporter of educating the enslaved and believed ‘divine providence will accomplish [abolition] in due time’.⁴⁵ As shown in the preceding chapter, education for the Covenanters was vital for *all* people, not just those serving in ministry or civic arenas. As the Presbyterian Church deemed education as a necessary means for proper industry in a free society, some ministers extended their instruction to those enslaved. One example that clearly demonstrated the vitality of education of Presbyterians was through the education, ordination, and ministry of John Chavis.⁴⁶ Chavis likely studied under Henry Pattillo in Granville, NC between 1780 and 1792.⁴⁷ In 1792, Chavis studied under John Witherspoon at the College of New Jersey (Princeton University) and later completed his studies at Liberty Hall Academy (Washington and Lee University) in Virginia.⁴⁸ In 1801, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church appointed him to teach. They commissioned ‘that in order to attain one important object of the contributions (the instruction of the blacks,) Mr. John Chavis, a black man of prudence and piety, who has been educated and licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Lexington, in Virginia, be employed as a missionary among people of his own colour’.⁴⁹ With his knowledge and ordination, Chavis taught enslaved people throughout Southern Virginia and North Carolina and in 1808 established a school in Raleigh, NC.⁵⁰ Throughout North Carolina, Presbyterian ministers made their mark in the education of the enslaved.

⁴⁵ Pattillo, *The Plain Planter’s Family Assistant*, p. 23.

⁴⁶ For a fuller context to Chavis, see Helen Chavis Othow, *John Chavis: African American Patriot, Preacher, Teacher, and Mentor 1783-1838* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2001); Orra Langhorne, ‘Negroes among the Scotch-Irish’ in *The Christian Register* 78, no. 17 (27 April 1899), pp. 459-460; Edgar W. Knight, ‘Notes on John Chavis’ in *The North Carolina Historical Review* 7, no. 3 (July 1930), pp. 326-345; and Margaret Burr DesChamps, ‘John Chavis as a Preacher to Whites’ in *The North Carolina Historical Review* 32, no. 2 (April, 1955), pp. 165-172.

⁴⁷ Othow, *John Chavis*, pp. 36-47.

⁴⁸ Knight, ‘Notes on John Chavis’, pp. 327-328 and Othow, *John Chavis*, pp. 44-47.

⁴⁹ *Minutes*, p. 229

⁵⁰ Knight, ‘Notes on John Chavis’, pp. 339-340.

However, the Presbyterian Church did not demand the immediate abolition of slavery. Rather, they called for slaveholders ‘wherever they find servants disposed to make a just improvement of the privilege, would give them a *peculium*, or grant them sufficient time and sufficient means of procuring their own liberty at a moderate rate, that thereby, they may be brought into society with those habits of industry that may render them useful citizens’.⁵¹ According to Emery, ‘the Reformed Presbyterians were among the first American religious denominations to condemn slavery; they were the very first to condemn the constitutionalization of the institution. It was the “worst of robberies sanctioned by law,” and could only subject the nation, deservedly, to divine judgment. It showed the essential evil of the American constitutional system, and the sin of the moral nation that had adopted that system’.⁵² In *Faith and Slavery*, Iain Whyte contended ‘that Scottish Presbyterians played a significant role by shifting the focus away from formal church pronouncements and onto the actions of individual members and congregations that alternatively defied and acquiesced in guidance of church leaders’.⁵³ Although Whyte focused specifically on Scotland during this period, this was equally present in North Carolina. As Joseph Moore has pointed out, the Covenanters and those of the covenanting tradition were the front-runners in the anti-slavery movement.⁵⁴

For some, the immediate demand for the abolition of slavery was paramount, but others believed abolition occurred best through the education of those currently enslaved in order to send freed slaves out fully prepared. However, many slave-owners left their slaves

⁵¹ *Records*, p. 540.

⁵² Emery, ‘Church and State in the Early Republic’, p. 496.

⁵³ Peter C. Messer and William Harrison Taylor, ‘Introduction’ in *Faith and Slavery in the Presbyterian Diaspora*, eds. William Harrison Taylor and Peter C. Messer (Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University Press, 2016), p. 7.

⁵⁴ Joseph S. Moore, ‘Covenanter and Antislavery in the Atlantic World’ in *Slavery & Abolition* 34, Issue 4, (2013), p. 544.

uneducated. Preceding the call for abolition, in 1787, the Synod instructed heads of families ‘to do every thing (*sic*) in their power consistent with the rights of civil society, to promote the abolition of slavery, and the instruction of negroes, whether bond or free’.⁵⁵ As mentioned previously, it was not until 1801 that the Reformed Presbyterians and 1818 that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States called for the ‘total abolition of slavery’. However, for those in North Carolina, anti-slavery was not their primary aim. The focus remained on education more than actual liberty as demonstrated with David Caldwell and his son Samuel Craighead Caldwell.

David Caldwell, as shown previously, had slaves personally. Since there are few records of his sermons and no journal to read, one cannot make the assertion that he ever spoke openly against slavery. However, in his sermon, *The Character and Doom of the Sluggard*, Caldwell declared that slavery and oppression was a result of being sluggard and ignorant and required the acquisition of knowledge in order to prohibit slavery.⁵⁶ According to the memoirs of Levi Coffin, a Quaker, and ‘Reputed President of the Underground Railroad’, Caldwell was a passive participant in the Underground Railroad as his plantation was ‘a mile and a half east of my father’s place’.⁵⁷ No specific records demonstrate Caldwell’s direct working with the Underground Railroad. However, Coffin noted in his *Reminiscences* that ‘the space between the two farms [Caldwell’s and Coffin’s] was densely overgrown with small trees, shrubs, and vines – ... and formed also good hiding-places for fugitive slaves’.⁵⁸ Some of Caldwell’s slaves even helped feed those who ran away from slavery and hid in the thicket. Not only had

⁵⁵ *Records*, p. 539.

⁵⁶ David Caldwell, ‘The Character and Doom of the Sluggard’ in Eli. W. Caruthers, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D.D.: Near Sixty Years Pastor of the Churches of Buffalo and Alamance* (Greensborough, NC: Swaim and Sherwood, 1842), pp. 273-284.

⁵⁷ Levi Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin, the Reputed President of the Underground Railroad: A Brief History of the Labors of a Lifetime in behalf of the slave, with the Stories of Numerous Fugitives, who gained their freedom through his Instrumentality, and many other Incidents*, 2nd ed. (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1880), p. 56.

⁵⁸ Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin*, p. 56.

Caldwell's slaves helped with feeding these runaways, but they also aided directly in their deliverance.

Coffin recalled his first venture into emancipating enslaved people around 1805 and wrote how he asked Caldwell's slave Tom to help in the release of a freeborn slave named Stephen. Tom, to whom Coffin referred to as 'trusty', brought Stephen to his father's house and provided the details of his enslavement. Within six months, 'Stephen was liberated and returned home'.⁵⁹ Caldwell supported Coffin's work but did not set his own enslaved people free. In fact, he bequeathed nine slaves to his wife, sons, and daughters in 1822. Samuel Craighead Caldwell, like his father, enslaved people. His middle name was that of his grandfather, Alexander Craighead. As pastor of Hopewell Presbyterian Church in Mecklenburg County, he followed the Presbyterian guidance that enslaved people must be educated for the purposes of liberty and industry in society. A letter written in September 1818 tells that Samuel set up Sabbath-Day Schools where 'black people are taught to read'.⁶⁰ However, neither Craighead's nor Caldwell's slaves ever experienced their legacy of independence.

Covenanters were systematic in their political theology in forming governments. Their system neglected the totality of humankind and focused primarily on only those who were in covenant. Covenant was a moral law and obligatory to all of humanity. So, when did the Presbyterians in North Carolina recognise this inconsistency? I cannot specifically answer

⁵⁹ Coffin, *Reminiscences of Levi Coffin*, pp. 16-17. This same slave, Tom, helped Caldwell 24 years prior with retrieving one of his horses that the Continental Army took without legal authority. For a detailed account of this, see Eli. W. Caruthers, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D.D.: Near Sixty Years Pastor of the Churches of Buffalo and Alamance* (Greensborough, NC: Swaim and Sherwood, 1842), p. 205.

⁶⁰ Letter of Samuel Craighead Caldwell, reprinted in *Religious Intelligencer*, 14 Nov. 1818, p. 377, cited in Ernest Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South*, vol. 1 (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1963), p. 206.

this question, because even well into the time of Manifest Destiny, Southern Presbyterians continued to justify slavery. Yet, this thesis clearly showed that the covenanting ministers utilised the notion of paternalism as a justification for holding others in captivity. The justification of slavery within covenanting thought in North Carolina was prevalent through the eternal liberty found within temporal circumstance. The Covenanters educated the enslaved in North Carolina. Through these, the answers to the questions presented at the beginning of this chapter demonstrated how the Covenanters confronted the dilemma of slavery during this period.

Presbyterian ministers throughout the backcountry of North Carolina amid their inconsistency began laying down the foundation for the later abolitionist movement with the education of enslaved people. Reformed Presbyterians were front-runners in the abolition movement in the early nineteenth century as evident in northern states and less prevalent in North Carolina.⁶¹ In North Carolina, Presbyterians inconsistently lived more by their words than by their deeds.

⁶¹ Moore, 'Covenanters and Antislavery in the Atlantic World', pp. 539 and Samuel Wylie, *Memoir of Alexander McLeod, D.D.* (New York: Charles Scribner, 1855), pp. 50-54. Wylie recalled his travels with Alexander McLeod and two other ministers throughout Kentucky, Tennessee, and South Carolina and detailed how one man from North Carolina 'absolutely refused to emancipate his negroes'.

Inference

As I started this thesis, I set out on a journey to discover the extent of Francis Schaeffer's assertion that the 'Declaration of Independence contains many elements of the Reformation thinking of Knox and Rutherford and should be carefully considered when discussing resistance. It speaks directly to the responsibility of citizens concerning oppressive civil government'. The evidence provided demonstrates that the resistance ideals of Knox and Rutherford played a role in small measure with the Resolves in a small hamlet in Mecklenburg County, and not necessarily the Declaration of Independence directly.

Those from the covenanting tradition built their ideals upon providence and hope. Initially, they set their hope upon Scotland and themselves as God's chosen people to carry out His desire of the nations. As presented in this thesis, covenanting thought reached well beyond the borders of Scotland. Without question, Covenanters were Scottish in heritage, but they later also became distinctly American. James Leyburn noted that 'the course of Presbyterianism in America between 1717 and 1789 neatly reflected the transformations of the mind and the social life of the Scotch-Irish as they became Americans.'¹ Yet, a key point demonstrated was that covenanting thought, whether in Scotland, Ireland, or America, provided ample ideological resources with which to build a case for and justify actions in pursuit of change. Rankin Sherling praised the Irish contribution, rightfully so, but the political ideology was predominantly Scottish.² However, in America, rather than seeking to change the monarchy as attempted in Scotland, covenanting thought shifted the focus more towards a sense of revolution rather than reformation. The Covenanters' political theology

¹ James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962), p. 273.

² Rankin Sherling, 'Selective Remembrance: Scottish sensibilities and forgotten Irish contributions to Reformed Presbyterianism in America' in *Journal of Transatlantic Studies*, vol. 11, no. 2, (May 2013), p. 159

was fundamental in understanding the American Revolution as covenanting thought established a deep-seated influence in the backcountry of North Carolina.

Their radical contribution extended beyond faith, doctrine, and practice. This thesis briefly set out the importance of covenant and specifically the two kingdoms doctrine for the Covenanters. From an Old Testament perspective, the covenant was the foundation of Israelite theology and identity. Likewise, covenant was the foundation of the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Covenanters. From a New Testament framework, many defined the church as God's chosen people much like the Israelites of the Old Testament. Another key aspect of understanding these interpretations of covenant was how later covenanting thought established further covenants that were extra-biblical, perpetual, and introduced dynamic shifts in interpretation of exactly what covenant meant. One shift that occurred was the Covenanters' understanding of the notion of allegiance. This shift redefined the understanding of covenant in North Carolina and provided avenues for the reasons for resistance, rebellion, revolution, reformation, and even regret.

As shown throughout this thesis, the ideas of resistance in North Carolina had their genesis in the political covenant theology of John Knox and the Scottish Covenanters. Many from the covenanting tradition relied heavily on their sense of rebellion throughout Mecklenburg and other western counties in the province of North Carolina. In some ways, this was contrary to the notion of covenant. However, for the Covenanters and some radical Presbyterians, the drive or motivation for opposition was in response to tyranny and did not provide the safety and assurance as demanded from government. Consequently, they continually separated themselves, and this dissent was not just in matters of religion, but also concerning matters of the state. Just as the political theology evolved, so too did the Covenanters' perspective

concerning just cause for rebellion as demonstrated with a few of the Regulators and Patriots of the American Revolution and their active rebellion against the crown. With the distinction of the position and place of the magistrate in relation to the monarchy as given by their covenanting predecessors, many in the backcountry of North Carolina, as proven with the Regulators, used this as a means or basis for violence.

The radical Presbyterians' ideology became reality and therefore compelled active rebellion. Because of this dynamic, the ministers of many who fought in the Regulator Movement became involved. Initially, the ministers, Hugh McAden, Henry Pattillo, and David Caldwell rejected the Regulators and pleaded for them to submit to the King.³ However, when Governor Tryon executed six of the Regulators, the tide turned and each of them moved in favour of rebellion. The issue of safety and protection from the magistrate that was once the concern of the Regulators became a concern for the entire colony. Many throughout the backcountry of North Carolina doubted that the governor would protect them. As such, they justified active rebellion biblically against the governor as an act of defence. Although the insurgency from the parishioners of the various congregations throughout the backcountry of North Carolina during the Regulator Movement proved to be unsuccessful in achieving their demands, it proved vital in persuading the leaders of these same churches to shift their covenantal interpretation to one of conditional understanding. Out of this change came the call for revolution among Presbyterian leaders, which turned this from a bottom-up resistance to a top-down revolution with the ministers leading the charge. Because of this, the

³ Durward Stokes, 'Henry Pattillo in North Carolina' in *The North Carolina Historical Review* 44, no 4 (October 1967), pp. 383-4; Eli W. Carruthers, *A sketch of the life and character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D. D. : near sixty years pastor of the churches of Buffalo and Alamance : including two of his sermons, some account of the Regulation, together with the revolutionary ... incidents in which he was concerned, and a very brief notice of the ecclesiastical and moral condition of North-Carolina while in its colonial state* (Greensborough, NC: Swaim and Sherwood, 1842), pp. 102-190; William Henry Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of Her Early Settlers* (New York: Robert Carter, 1846), pp. 46-67.

Covenanter movement in America set to re-establish the notion as God's chosen people and later as a nation to bring about salvation. The ministers joined in the patriot cause calling for the 'salvation' of the entire colony and later inciting calls for revolution.

The interconnections between the ministers throughout the backcountry of North Carolina further demonstrated how the political theology of Scottish covenanting thought transmitted throughout the region. As a result, revolution and independence became priorities. This was so prevalent in the region that British leaders and soldiers deemed it one of the 'most hostile' in all the American Colonies. As demonstrated, the piedmont region of North Carolina proved crucial in their calls for resistance, rebellion, and revolution. Politicians alone did not lead the top-down revolution, but they led along with the pastors and ministers in the backcountry of Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, where some later became politicians. Although some of the Presbyterian Churches in the piedmont region of North Carolina were loyal originally to the monarchy, under the leadership of radical Presbyterians in the backcountry of North Carolina, they later merged with the patriot cause and succeeded in promoting revolution.

By looking at the case study of Mecklenburg County and the men who participated in local politics along with their connections with the seven sisters, one can see that their actions demonstrated the radical influence of a newly developed covenant interpretation. Because of this, one can implicitly understand that the American Covenanters took on a more radical view or interpretation of the Scottish Covenanters' theology of resistance and through this contributed to the patriot cause of the American Revolution especially in the backcountry of North Carolina. Attributes mentioned previously about Covenanters as over-confident and belligerent was evident from its beginnings in Scotland, through the American Revolution,

and even to the ratification of the US Constitution. Although the evidence provided earlier pointed to the leadership more than the soldiers specifically, clearly the influence of the local Presbyterian churches, ministers, and elders encouraged others to participate actively in the Revolution. The political theology of the radical Presbyterians did not occur within a vacuum but was prevalent in the region in the height of the American Revolution. Through this re-telling of North Carolina's contribution to the American Revolution, the identity of Scottish covenanting thought became prevalent in this region and one that played a part in reforming the identity of the new American nation through education and government. As seen previously, one of the foundational attributes of covenanting thought was the place or role of the community, such as the family, the church, and the nation. Thomas Taylor noted that 'North Carolinians tried to tame their self-doubts (of the impending revolution) by emphasizing loyalty to family, church, and community. Such an effort required schooling in the ways of the society and a vigorous attack on outside, divergent values'.⁴ The promotion of this occurred primarily through Sunday worship and daily education. Samuel McCorkle, while leading the church at Thyatira 'established a lending library... for the use of the entire community. Within his own congregation, he circulated lessons for the children of each family'.⁵ He later expanded beyond the family lessons to catechism. Likewise, in Mecklenburg County, the students read the covenanting treatises on resistance from the library at Queen's College. The Covenanters did not spread their ideology solely from the pulpit in their churches, but from the lecterns in academic halls such as Princeton, Queen's Museum, Caldwell's academy, Log College, and through the University of North Carolina. Through this education, the ideology of covenanting thought spread and evolved. As a result, covenanting thought did in fact play a small, but significant role in the promotion and spread

⁴ Thomas T. Taylor, 'Samuel E. McCorkle and a Christian Republic' in *American Presbyterians*, vol. 63, no. 4, (Winter, 1985), p. 375.

⁵ Taylor, 'Samuel E. McCorkle and a Christian Republic', p. 376.

of republicanism throughout the backcountry of North Carolina. Through all the positives of education and reforming the government, the Covenanters in the late eighteenth century were inconsistent in their interpretation and expression of liberty.

Although the Covenanters were methodical in their political theology in forming governments, their system neglected the totality of humankind. This thesis did not focus on answering the questions of where slavery fitted within their purpose. Likewise, this thesis did not pinpoint the timing of when they recognised their inconsistency. Regardless, this thesis clearly showed that the covenanting ministers utilised their sense of paternalism as an explanation for enslaving people. Their understanding of temporal circumstance was the justification for slavery within covenanting thought in North Carolina. The Covenanters felt it pertinent to educate the enslaved in North Carolina, and they believed this was their duty to God and to the enslaved. Through the educating of enslaved people and the slow shift away from the system of slavery, the covenanting ministers in the backcountry of North Carolina laid down the initial rails for the Underground Railroad and the later abolitionist movement. This was penance for their remorse for slavery.

As mentioned in the introduction, the primary aims for this thesis were three-fold – to recover the link between covenanting thought and the American Revolution, to demonstrate that the religious story of the American Revolution was not just a New England one, and to illustrate that the ideological origins of the Revolution were not just ‘English’. Examining the implications of covenanting thought was not on these three inferences alone. Studies examining the transatlantic relationship between Scotland and America have proven fruitful; however, recent research has primarily focused on the influence of the Scottish Enlightenment on the cultural and intellectual history of America. This project examined

political thought within covenant theology and considered how this formed and evolved in Scotland and later transmitted throughout the American Colonies with a focus on North Carolina. The focus was on the political history of mid- to late-eighteenth century, but also contributed to historical theology by examining the methods and behaviour of the Covenanters in Scotland and America. By considering the development of beliefs and political cultures, this study helped to revise the understanding of the political implications of theology and reinterpreted the role of Scottish covenanting thought in Colonial America, and as a result, recovered the link between covenanting thought and the American Revolution.

Much of the scholarship pertaining to American religious history has long interpreted New England as the model of the American character and ideology. There is validity for the argument that religious consensus grew out of New England and the Calvinist tradition, which this thesis also demonstrated. Coupled with this, much of the scholarship pertaining to the American Revolution pointed to England as the genesis for its ideology. Yet, this study affirmed that the ideological origins were not just 'English' as supported with the Scottish covenanting contribution. Although mired in the dilemma of slavery as the Founding Fathers were, the Covenanters also contributed socially, culturally, and intellectually through promoting revolution, encouraging education, and forming a new government. Likewise, in relation to the Covenanters as a sect of 'radical' Presbyterianism, although my aim was not to set out to establish their call for resistance as the norm or the consensus ideologically, theirs was a thread that contributed to the larger tapestry of the American Revolution. There is a limited amount of scholarship concerning the so-called 'idealism' of the Covenanters. This thesis provided a starting point in correcting this and demonstrated that covenanting thought and ideology offer an additional intellectual understanding of the American Revolution.

The attributes ascribed to the Covenanters throughout this thesis were but a small glimpse into the fuller understanding of covenanting thought. Each of these attributes viewed independently was minor and, in some cases, weak, but combined their ideology became radical and quite powerful. In addition, having these attributes combined within a collective segment of a society promoted radical shifts in such a way that a region, in an Anglican province, rose up in rebellion against the crown. Gordon Wood noted that the American Revolution was radical because of its subtlety within a society and that to be an American was a ‘matter of common belief and behavior’.⁶ However, this thesis proved that the so-called radicalism of the Covenanters, especially in North Carolina was anything but subtle.

⁶ Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, First Vintage Books Edition, March 1993 (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), p. 336.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: North Carolina – Guilford, Mecklenburg, and Rowan Counties
along with Thirteen Original States Population
(1790 US Census, Head of Families)

State	Free White Males 16+	Free White Males -16	Free White Females	All other Free Persons	Slaves	Total	Total Whites	% of Enslaved to total Population	Ratio of Enslaved to Whites
North Carolina	69,988	77,506	140,710	4,975	100,572	393,751	288,204	25.54%	0.35
Guilford	1607	1799	3242	27	516	7,191	6,648	7.18%	0.08
Mecklenburg	2378	2573	4771	70	1603	11,395	9,722	14.07%	0.16
Rowan	3288	3837	6864	97	1742	15,828	13,989	11.01%	0.12
State	Free White Males 16+	Free White Males -16	Free White Females	All other Free Persons	Slaves	Total	Total Whites	% of Slaves to total Population	Ratio of Enslaved to Whites
South Carolina	35,576	37,722	66,880	1,801	107,094	249,073	140,178	43.00%	0.76
Virginia	110,936	116,135	215,046	12,866	292,627	747,610	442,117	39.14%	0.66
Georgia	13,103	14,044	25,739	398	29,264	82,548	52,886	35.45%	0.55
Maryland	55,915	51,339	101,395	8,043	103,036	319,728	208,649	32.23%	0.49
North Carolina	69,988	77,506	140,710	4,975	100,572	393,751	288,204	25.54%	0.35
Delaware	11,783	12,143	22,384	3,899	8,887	59,096	46,310	15.04%	0.19
New York	83,700	78,122	152,320	4,654	21,324	340,120	314,142	6.27%	0.07
New Jersey	45,251	41,416	83,287	2,762	11,423	184,139	169,954	6.20%	0.07
Rhode Island	16,019	15,799	32,652	3,407	948	68,825	64,470	1.38%	0.01
Connecticut	60,523	54,403	117,448	2,808	2,764	237,946	232,374	1.16%	0.01
Pennsylvania	110,788	106,948	206,363	6,537	3,737	434,373	424,099	0.86%	0.01
New Hampshire	36,086	34,851	70,160	630	158	141,885	141,097	0.11%	0.00
Massachusetts	95,453	87,289	190,582	5,463	-	378,787	373,324	0.00%	0.00
Thirteen Original States	745,121	727,717	1,424,966	58,243	681,834	3,637,881	2,897,804	18.74%	0.24
United States (Plus SW and N Territories)	813,365	802,127	1,556,628	59,511	697,697	3,929,328	3,172,120	17.76%	0.22

Table 2: North Carolina Residents Listed in Thesis
(1790 US Census, Head of Families)

Name	County	Page	Free White Males 16+	Free White Males -16	Free White Females	All other Free Persons	Slaves	Total	% of enslaved to total Population	Total Whites	Ratio of Enslaved to Whites
Gen. Thomas Polk	Mecklenburg	159	5	0	4	0	47	56	83.93%	9	5.22
William R. Davie	Halifax	64	1	2	2	0	36	41	87.80%	5	7.20
Maj. John Davidson	Mecklenburg	160	2	2	6	0	26	36	72.22%	10	2.60
Waightstill Avery	Burke	107	1	1	6	0	24	32	75.00%	8	3.00
Col. Ezekiel Polk	Hardeman (TN)	ND	1	0	2	0	24	27	88.89%	3	8.00
John McKnitt Alexander	Mecklenburg	159	3	0	1	0	16	20	80.00%	4	4.00
Maj. James Harris	Mecklenburg	162	4	0	1	0	13	18	72.22%	5	2.60
Robert Harris, Sr.	Mecklenburg	160	2	1	4	0	11	18	61.11%	7	1.57
Henry Patillo	Granville	90	3	0	3	0	9	15	60.00%	6	1.50
David Caldwell	Guilford	152	3	5	3	0	8	19	42.11%	11	0.73
Gen. Joseph Graham	Mecklenburg	158	1	1	2	0	8	12	66.67%	4	2.00
John Foard (*Ford)	Mecklenburg	162	1	0	2	0	7	10	70.00%	3	2.33
Matthew McClure	Mecklenburg	160	3	0	2	0	6	11	54.55%	5	1.20
Charles Alexander	Mecklenburg	164	3	1	4	0	6	14	42.86%	8	0.75
Samuel McCorkle	Rowan	178	1	1	4	0	6	12	50.00%	6	1.00
Col. Adam Alexander	Mecklenburg	162	3	1	3	0	5	12	41.67%	7	0.71
Gen. George Graham	Mecklenburg	158	1	2	2	0	4	9	44.44%	5	0.80
Robert Craighead	Mecklenburg	159	2	4	3	0	4	13	30.77%	9	0.44
Henry Downs (*Dawns)	Mecklenburg	163	2	0	0	0	3	5	60.00%	2	1.50
Gen. Robert Irwin	Mecklenburg	159	1	2	2	0	1	6	16.67%	5	0.20
Hezekiah Alexander	Mecklenburg	159	1	0	2	0	1	4	25.00%	3	0.33
Ezra Alexander	Mecklenburg	158	3	1	3	0	0	7	0.00%	7	0.00
Capt. Zaccheus Wilson	Mecklenburg	159	1	1	1	0	0	3	0.00%	3	0.00
Richard Barry (*Berry)	Mecklenburg	160	4	0	6	0	0	10	0.00%	10	0.00
John Queary (*Quary)	Mecklenburg	163	3	0	1	0	0	4	0.00%	4	0.00
William Graham	Mecklenburg	164	1	0	2	0	0	3	0.00%	3	0.00
	Total		56	25	71	0	265	417	63.55%	152	1.74

Table 3: Mecklenburg Residents Listed in Thesis
(1790 US Census, Head of Families)

Name	County	Page	Free White Males 16+	Free White Males -16	Free White Females	All other Free Persons	Slaves	Total	% of enslaved to total Population	Total Whites	Ratio of Enslaved to Whites
Gen. Thomas Polk	Mecklenburg	159	5	0	4	0	47	56	83.93%	9	5.22
Maj. John Davidson	Mecklenburg	160	2	2	6	0	26	36	72.22%	10	2.60
John McKnitt Alexander	Mecklenburg	159	3	0	1	0	16	20	80.00%	4	4.00
Maj. James Harris	Mecklenburg	162	4	0	1	0	13	18	72.22%	5	2.60
Robert Harris, Sr.	Mecklenburg	160	2	1	4	0	11	18	61.11%	7	1.57
Gen. Joseph Graham	Mecklenburg	158	1	1	2	0	8	12	66.67%	4	2.00
John Foard (*Ford)	Mecklenburg	162	1	0	2	0	7	10	70.00%	3	2.33
Matthew McClure	Mecklenburg	160	3	0	2	0	6	11	54.55%	5	1.20
Charles Alexander	Mecklenburg	164	3	1	4	0	6	14	42.86%	8	0.75
Col. Adam Alexander	Mecklenburg	162	3	1	3	0	5	12	41.67%	7	0.71
Gen. George Graham	Mecklenburg	158	1	2	2	0	4	9	44.44%	5	0.80
Robert Craighead	Mecklenburg	159	2	4	3	0	4	13	30.77%	9	0.44
Henry Downs (*Dawns)	Mecklenburg	163	2	0	0	0	3	5	60.00%	2	1.50
Gen. Robert Irwin	Mecklenburg	159	1	2	2	0	1	6	16.67%	5	0.20
Hezekiah Alexander	Mecklenburg	159	1	0	2	0	1	4	25.00%	3	0.33
Ezra Alexander	Mecklenburg	158	3	1	3	0	0	7	0.00%	7	0.00
Capt. Zaccheus Wilson	Mecklenburg	159	1	1	1	0	0	3	0.00%	3	0.00
Richard Barry (*Berry)	Mecklenburg	160	4	0	6	0	0	10	0.00%	10	0.00
John Queary (*Quary)	Mecklenburg	163	3	0	1	0	0	4	0.00%	4	0.00
William Graham	Mecklenburg	164	1	0	2	0	0	3	0.00%	3	0.00
Total			46	16	51	0	158	271	58.30%	113	1.40

Table 4: Mecklenburg Committee of Safety Individuals where status was
Unknown / Resided Elsewhere / Deceased
(1790 US Census, Head of Families)

Individuals Deceased or No Records Found:	
John Flennikin	Unknown
Capt. James Jack	Resided in Georgia
Col. William Kennon	Resided in Virginia
Rev. Francis Cummings	York (SC) No Record Found
John Pfifer	Deceased 1776
Rev. Hezekiah Balch	Deceased 1776
Col Abraham Alexander	Deceased 1778
Dr. Ephraim Brevard	Deceased 1781
Neil Morrison	Deceased 1784
David Reese	Deceased 1787

Table 5: Mecklenburg Committee of Safety and Participation in Militia

[illegible]